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Faust

A Tragedy

PART II. (*continued*)

Faust

Lover

Goethe

Nathan Haskell Dole

Publishers

Last Meeting of William of Orange and Count Egmont
Photogravure from the painting by Max Adams

Leipzig Edition de Luxe

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Faust: A Tragedy

ACT III.

SCENE. — *In front of the Palace of Menelaus at Sparta.*

Enter HELEN, *with a Chorus of Captive Trojan Women.* — PANTHALIS *leader of the Chorus.*

HELENA.

I, HELENA, of men much famed, and much reviled,
From yonder shore, where we but now have landed, come,
Still reeling with the heave, and ever-restless roll
Of ocean billows wild, whose high and foamy crests,
By Euros' might and great Poseidon's grace, have borne
Us back from Phrygia's plains to these our native bays.
Now on the sea-beach joys King Menelaus, thus
Returning safe with all his bravest warriors back.
But oh, how welcome thou to me, thou mansion fair,
Which Tyndarus, my sire, when home returning, reared,
Hard by the broad incline of Pallas' sacred hill;
And, when I here with Clytemnestra, sisterly,
With Castor, Pollux too, grew up in gladsome play,
That in its trappings rich all Sparta's homes excelled!
Ye portal's brazen wings, lo, here I bid ye hail!
Through ye, wide open flung with hospitable sweep,

Did Menelaus first, of many chosen the chief,
Upon my vision beam in bridegroom guise of yore.
Expand to me again, that, as doth spouse beseem,
My lord's high urgent 'hest I rightly may fulfil!
Let me go in, and oh! may all the storms of fate,
Which round my path have swept till now, remain behind!
For since I parted hence, a stranger then to care,
To offer homage due at Cytherea's shrine,
And there was by a spoiler seized, the Phrygian boy,
Hath misadventure much befallen, which men are fain
To babble of, but which offends his ear, whose tale,
Expanding as it spread, to gossip fable grew.

CHORUS.

Fairest of women, despise not thou!
The treasure, supreme in honour, is thine!
For to thee, thee alone, has the chief boon been given,
The fame of a beauty unmatched in the world.
Before the hero his name resounds,
And therefore his port is proud,
But even the stubbornest veils his pride
In the presence of beauty, the lord of all.

HELENA.

Enough said! With my lord I hitherward have sailed,
And now before him I am to his city sent;
Yet what his purpose is, defies me to divine.
Come I as consort back? Or come I as a queen?
Or as a victim for the princes' direful woes,
And for the years of loss and shame the Greeks endured?
A captive, or a friend recaptured, which am I?
For the Immortals marked a doubtful fame, belike,
And destiny for me, — companions dread that wait
On beauty, and upon the very threshold here

Stand at my side with dark and threatening mien.
For even within the hollow ship my husband scarce
Vouchsafed to me one look, nor word of comfort spoke,
As brooding some fell purpose, fronting me he sat.
But when Eurotas' deep-indented bay we gained,
Scarce of our vessels' prows the foremost kissed the land,
When, starting up, he spake, as by the God inspired.
"My warriors troop by troop shall from the ships descend,
And I will marshal them in order on the beach;
But thou, go on at once, still keeping by the banks,
Wealthy in fruit, that bound Eurotas' sacred stream,
Driving the steeds across the moist bloom-dappled meads,
Until thou shalt arrive on the delightsome plain
Where Lacedemon, once a broad and fertile field,
Close girdled by the solemn mountains, lifts its roofs.
There enter straight the lofty tower-crowned royal house,
And round thee call the maids whom there I left behind,
Also the Stewardess, that matron old and sage.
Bid her to thee the pile of hoarded treasures show,
Was by thy sire bequeathed, and which, in war and peace
Augmenting evermore, I have myself amassed.
In order duly ranged thou'lt find them all; for 'tis
The prince's privilege to find, on his return,
The things preserved with care, in their appointed place,
Even as he left them, when he parted from his home.
For nothing of himself the slave hath power to change."

CHORUS.

Now gladden thine eye and thy heart by viewing
The glorious treasures, the spoils of years!

For the armlet fair, and the jewelled crown
Rest haughtily there, of their lustre proud;
But enter and challenge them all, right soon
Shall they 'quip them for war.
I joy in the conflict where beauty vies
With gold and with pearl and with luminous gem.

HELENA.

Thereafter from my lord there followed this command:
"Now when in order all thou thoroughly hast viewed,
As many tripods take as thou shalt needful deem,
And vessels of all kinds, which he at hand requires
Who to the gods performs high sacrificial rites;—
The caldrons, salvers too, and patera withal;
Pure water crystal clear from the sacred fount be by,
In lofty pitchers — well-dried fagots furthermore,
That quickly kindle into flame, have ready there;
And, last of all, fail not a knife of keenest edge;
What other things may lack I trust thy care to find."
So spake he, urging my departure straight; but nought
That breathes the breath of life did his injunctions show,
Which he, in honour of the Olympians, wished to slay.
'Tis very strange; yet I will nurse that thought no more,
But leave all to the will of the great gods on high,
Who bring to pass whate'er they in their minds decree;
And seem it good to man, or seem it ill, it must
Be borne; for mortal man, his duty is to bear.
The ministering priest full many a time hath raised
The ponderous axe above the earth-bowed victim's neck,
Yet could not strike the blow, for suddenly his hand
By intervening foe or deity was stayed.

CHORUS.

The fate of the future thou canst not divine.
Enter, queen, enter,
Be of good cheer!
Good and ill cometh
To man without warning;
E'en when foretold us we credit it not.
What saw we, when Troy was in flames, before us?
Death, death only, a death of shame!
Yet are we not here,
Mated with thee, serving thee joyfully,
Beholding the sun in heaven resplendent,
Beholding what is on the earth most fair,
Thee, to us happy ones gracious and kind!

HELENA.

A truce to fear! Whate'er betide, 'tis meet that I,
No longer lingering, should ascend the royal house,
Which, long lost, sighed for much, and well-nigh forfeited,
Stands once again before my eyes, I know not how.
With weak and tottering tread I mount its lofty steps,
Up which erewhile I sprang, a light and frolic child.

CHORUS.

Fling, O ye sisters, that
Mourn your captivity,
Grief to the winds!
Share in the bliss
Of your mistress,
Share in Helena's bliss,
Who joyfully neareth
The hearth of her fathers
With step that, though late
To return, is more firm
For the years that have flown.

Praise ye the holy,
Happy-restoring
And home-bringing gods!
Over fate's rudest shocks,
As upon pinions,
Floats the enfranchised one, the while
The captive, vainly his arms outspreading
Over his dungeon's ramparts,
Pines dejected away.

But a god caught her up
In her exile afar;
And from Ilion's ruins
Transported her back
To the old, newly decorate
Home of her sires,
After unspeakable
Pleasures and pains,
On the days of her childhood
To ponder anew.

PANTHALIS (*as leader of the Chorus*).

Forsake we now the joy environed path of song,
And turn our gaze awhile upon the portal's wings.
What see I, sisters? Lo, the queen returning here,
And flying too with wild and agitated step?
What is it, mighty queen? What sight or sound of dread
Could greet thee in thy halls, instead of welcoming
From thine own people? This expect not to conceal;
For plainly can I read displeasure on thy brow,
A wrath of noble sort, that struggles with surprise.

HELENA (*who has entered in great agitation, leaving the folding-doors open*).

Beseemeth not Jove's child to own a vulgar dread,
Nor fleeting touch of fear hath power to move her soul

But Horror grim, that, in the womb of ancient Night
And Chaos old begot, in form and shape diverse,
As clouds of lurid smoke from the volcano's throat,
Comes whirling forth, doth even the hero's breast appal.
In such appalling wise the Stygian gods to-day
My entrance to my home have signalised, that fain
I would, like guest dismissed, for ever bid farewell
To that dear threshold, ofttime trod, and yearned for long.
But no! I have retreated hither to the light,
Nor shall ye drive me further, Powers, whate'er ye be!
Some expiation I'll devise, then, purged from blame,
The hearth-fire may bid hail the consort like her lord.

PANTHALIS.

Disclose, O noble queen, to thy handmaidens, who
In reverence and in love attend thee, what hath chanced!

HELENA.

The thing that I have seen your eyes shall also see,
If ancient Night hath not within her murky womb
With sudden close engulfed the creature which she bred.
That ye may know it, list! My words its form shall paint.
As I, my thoughts intent upon my mission, passed
With solemn tread along the inmost palace halls,
I marvelled at the hushed and vacant corridors,
No sound fell on the ear of moving to and fro,
Nor met the eye the sweep of quick and busy haste.
No maid was to be seen, nor stewardess, who erst
With friendly welcome wont all strangers to salute.
But to the inner hearth when I had made my way,
There, by the embers of the smouldering fire, I saw,
Crouched on the ground, a woman thickly muffled, huge;
Asleep she seemed not, but like one in reverie wrapt.

With voice of stern command I bade her " Up, to work ! "
Not doubting 'twas the aged stewardess, the same
My lord had sagely left behind to guard his home;
Yet moveless as a stone, still muffled there she sits.
Stirred by my threats, at length she raises her right arm,
As though from hearth and hall to beckon me away.
In wrath I turn away from her, and presently
Speed to the steps whereon towers high the thalamus,
Magnificently decked, the treasure-room hard by;
But swiftly from the ground up springs the wondrous shape,
Imperiously obstructs my passage, and displays,
In long and meagre bulk, with hollow bloodshot eyes,
A form so wild and weird, might eye and soul confound.
But to the winds I speak; for impotent are words,
To body forth to life such images as these.
There ! See her for yourselves ! She dares confront the light !
Here we bear sway, until our royal lord arrives.
The ghastly births of Night doth Phœbus, Beauty's friend,
Chase to their native dens, or fetter fast in chains.

[PHORKYAS *appears on the threshold between the door-posts.*

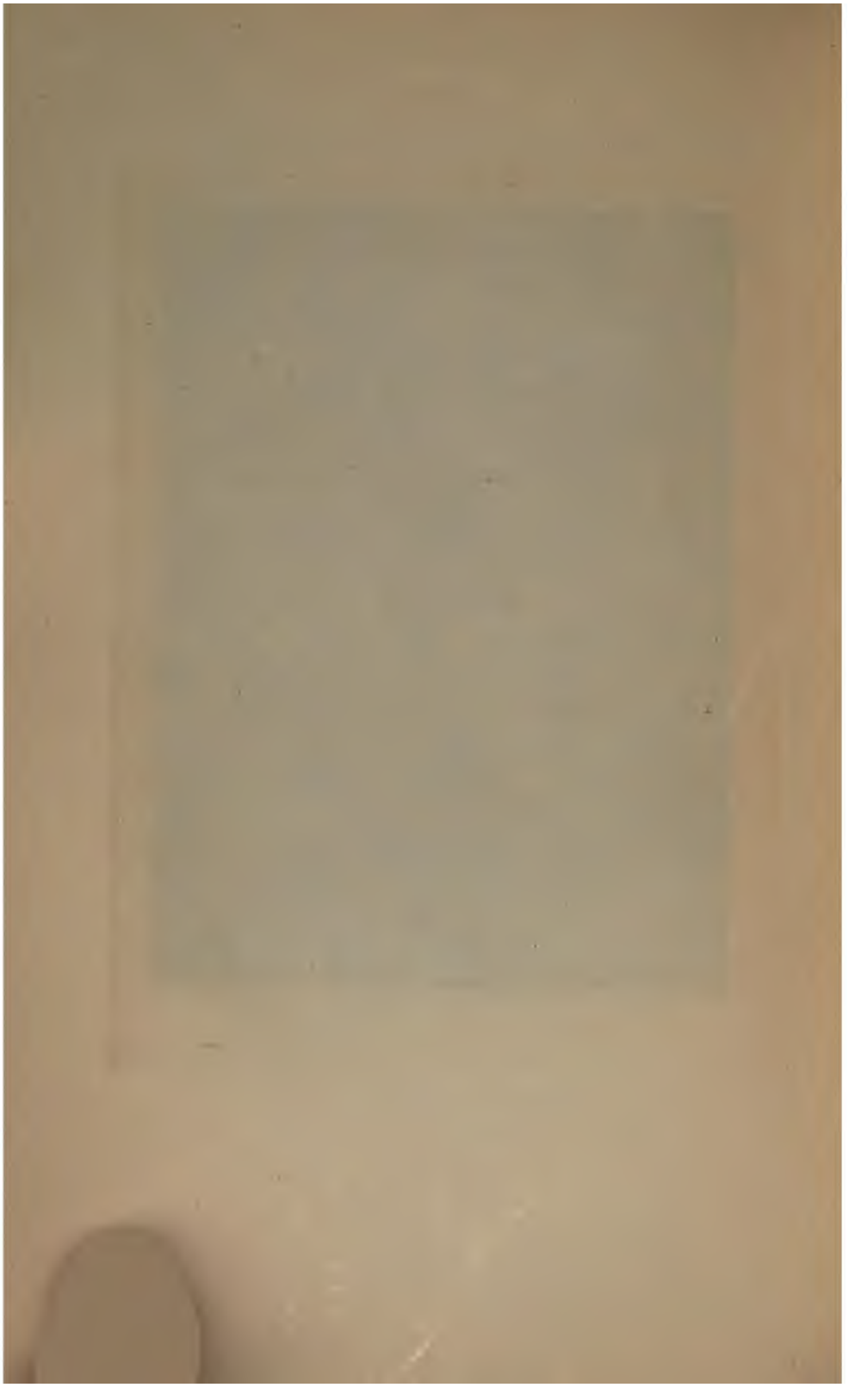
CHORUS.

Much have I seen and known, though my tresses
Youthfully undulate still round my temples,
Horrors I've witnessed full many, the woful
Havoc of warfare, Ilion, the night
When it fell !

Over the cloud-covered, dust-thickened din of
Death-grappling warriors, heard I the gods
Shouting, dread clamour ! heard I the brazen
Voices of Discord clang through the field
To the walls.

"The woeful havoc of warfare"

[illegible] from a painting by Rochegrosse



Ah, they yet towered high, Ilion's
Walls! But the merciless
Flame shot from roof to roof,
Spreading and broadening,
Hitherward, thitherward,
Fanned by the fury
Itself had engendered,
Over the city by night.

Flying I saw, through smoke and glare,
And tongues of eddying flame,
Deities grimly stalk in wrath,
Figures wonderful, gigantic,
Striding through the dusky
Fire-illumined gloom.

Did I see, or was it fancy
Shaped amid my spirit's anguish
Phantoms so confused and wild?
That I ne'er may tell.
Yet that with my eyes I gaze on
This revolting thing before me,
Of a verity I know.
Yea, my very hands might grasp it,
Did not terror hold me back
From the venture dread.

Which of the daughters
Of Phorkys art thou?
For of her kindred
Surely thou art.
Art thou, perchance, sprung of the Graiæ,
Sisters appalling, of Darkness engendered,
Alternately using
One eye and one tooth?

Darest thou, monster,
Sidelong with beauty,
Thyself unto Phœbus'
Keen glances unveil?
Yet come thou out boldly, it recks not,
For on ugliness looketh he never,
Even as his blessèd eye never
The gloom of a shadow beholds.

But alas! we mortals are fated
By a woful doom to endure
The unspeakable anguish of eye,
Which the monstrous, the evermore loathly,
In lovers of beauty awake.

Hear then, hear, if unblushingly
Thou wilt confront us, curses,
Threatenings of manifold ill
From the ban-laden lips of the blest ones,
Who are moulded and made by the gods!

PHORKYAS.

Old is the saw, but true its meaning and profound,
That modesty doth ne'er with beauty, hand in hand,
One common path along the verdant earth pursue.
Enrooted deep in both hate from of old abides,
And thus where'er, whene'er, they cross each other's track,
Each doth her back upon her adversary turn,
Then speedeth on her way with quickened tread again;
Coy modesty perplexed, but beauty proud and fierce,
Till Orcus' hollow night at length devours her up,
If Age hath not before subdued her haughty pride.
Ye wantons, now I find ye, wafted from afar,
Wagging your saucy tongues, like flight of clangorous cranes,

Hoarse-screaming as they wing above our heads, a long
And sable cloud, and send a croaking clamour down,
Which lures the wanderer, pacing silent on his way,
To raise his eyes aloft; but they hold on their course,
And so goes he on his: so will it be with us.
Who, then, are ye, that thus with Mænad fury wild,
Like drunken brawlers, dare these royal gates assail?
Who are ye, I would know, that howl your wrath against
The house's stewardess, like dogs that bay the moon?
Think ye, I know not well the kith whereof ye come?
Thou callow brood, begot of war, in battle nursed,
Lascivious crew, at once seducing and seduced,
That sap the warrior's strength, the burgher's too as well!
Thus huddled here, to me ye seem a locust swarm,
Alighted like a cloud upon the early grain.
Consumers ye of others' industry! Smooth-lipped
Destroyers of the fruits of year-long wary thrift!
And thou, thou ravished, huckstered, fingered piece of goods!

HELENA.

Who, with the mistress by, the handmaids dares to chide,
Audaciously usurps her privilege of rule;
For unto her alone pertains it to extol
Whoso be worthy praise, as to chastise the ill.
Full well content am I with the good service they
Did at my bidding, when great Ilion's mighty strength
That lengthened leaguer stood, and fell, and low was laid;
Nor less throughout our travel's drear vicissitudes,
Where people commonly think only of themselves.
Here from the busy train like conduct I expect;
Not what the servant is, but how he serves, the lord
Inquires. Then silence, thou! and rail on them no more!

If thou the royal house hast duly kept till now,
The mistress' place supplying, be it to thy praise.
But now herself is come, step back into thy sphere,
Lest chastisement, not guerdon, follow as thy due!

PHORKYAS.

To chide the household is a high prerogative,
Which the heaven-favoured lord's illustrious spouse, by years
Of management discreet, most rightfully doth earn.
As thou, whom now I know, dost here again resume
Thy whilom place of queen, and mistress of the house,
Seize thou the reins, that long have hung relaxed, rule now,
The treasures take in charge, and take us too with them;
But, chief of all, shield me, that oldest am in years,
From this pert band, who near thy swan-like loveliness
Are but a flock of cackling, poorly feathered geese.

PANTHALIS.

How hideous showeth hideousness by beauty's side!

PHORKYAS.

How foolish by the side of wisdom foolishness!

(*The following repartees are spoken by the Choretides, stepping out individually from the Chorus:*)

CHORETIDE 1.

Tell us of father Erebus, of mother Night!

PHORKYAS.

Then speak of Scylla thou, thy sister uterine!

CHORETIDE 2.

From thy ancestral stock hath many a monster sprung.

PHORKYAS.

Away to Orcus, seek thy kith and kindred there!

CHORETIDE 3.

Who have their dwelling there are much too young for thee.

PHORKYAS.

Tiresias, hoar with eld, go wooing unto him!

CHORETIDE 4.

Thy great-granddaughter was Orion's nurse, I trow.

PHORKYAS.

By Harpies thou, I ween, wert fattened up in filth.

CHORETIDE 5.

Such scragginess supreme, how dost thou nourish that?

PHORKYAS.

Not with the blood which thou art ever keen to lap.

CHORETIDE 6.

Thy teeth for corpses long, a loathly corpse thyself.

PHORKYAS.

Pah! in thy saucy chops a vampire's grinders gleam.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Thine should be closed, were I to mention who thou art.

PHORKYAS.

Name thou thine own name first, then is the riddle solved.

HELENA.

In sorrow, not in wrath, I interpose to place
My ban upon this wild and stormy war of words.
For to the master nought more mischievous befalls,
Than rancours by his trusty serfs in secret nursed.
His mandates' echo then returns to him no more
Harmoniously in deeds with ready zeal performed;
No! gusts of wilful brawl buzz evermore around
His 'wildered head, while he commands and chides in vain;
Nor this alone. Ye have in your unmannered wrath
Evoked and conjured forth dread forms of mould unblest,
That throng upon me so, I feel as I were dragged
To Orcus down, despite the natal soil I tread.
Is't memory, or fancy, thus lays hold on me?
Was I all this? or am I? Or am I to be
The phantom dire to scare yon town-destroying crew?
My maidens quail; but thou, the oldest of them all,
Thou art unmoved, — then speak, resolve me of my fears.

PHORKYAS.

Who on long years of joy diversified looks back,
To him heaven's choicest gifts appear at last a dream.
But thou, high-favoured far beyond all bound or stint,
Along thy way of life didst only suitors see,
With souls on fire to dare all perils for thy love.
Thee Theseus, fired with passion, early carried off,
A man of glorious mould, and stout as Hercules.

HELENA.

He bore me off by force, a ten years' timorous doe,
And in Aphidnus' keep in Attica immured.

PHORKYAS.

But thence by Castor and by Pollux soon set free,
A rare heroic band came wooing to thy feet.

HELENA.

But my heart's secret love, I willingly avow,
Patroclus won, that was Pelides' other self.

PHORKYAS.

Yet thee thy father did to Menelaus plight,
The ocean-rover bold, the house-sustainer too.

HELENA.

His daughter and with her his sceptre too he gave;
And from these nuptials sprang Hermione, my child.

PHORKYAS.

Yet whilst afar for Crete, his heritage, he fought,
Stole on thy solitude a guest was all too fair.

HELENA.

Wherefore remind me thus of that half widowhood,
And all the train of ills which had from it their birth?

PHORKYAS.

That voyage caused to me, a free-born child of Crete,
Captivity, — a doom of lifelong slavery.

HELENA.

His stewardess wert thou appointed here full soon,
With much entrusted, — house and treasure stoutly won.

PHORKYAS.

All which didst thou desert for Ilion's tower-girt town,
And for the joys of love that perish not, nor pall.

HELENA.

Speak not to me of joys! No! Anguish, bitter woe
Have 'whelmed me, heart and brain, like an unending sea!

PHORKYAS.

Yet, it is said that thou a twofold form didst wear,
In Ilion seen, and seen in Egypt too the while.

HELENA.

My weak and wandering mind confound not utterly.
Who, what I truly am, even now I cannot tell.

PHORKYAS.

And furthermore they say that from the phantom-world
Achilles rose heart-fired, and linked himself with thee!
Thee loving from of yore, despite all Fate's resolves.

HELENA.

A phantom I to him a phantom was allied.
It was a dream, the words themselves proclaim as much.
I faint away, and grow a phantom to myself.
[*Sinks into the arms of the Semi-chorus.*

CHORUS.

Silence! silence!
Thou of the evil eye,
Thou of the evil tongue!
Through lips of such ghastliness,
Grim with one tooth, what
Fell exhalations
Rise from a gulf so revolting and dread!

For the malignant that masks him in kindness,
Heart of a wolf 'neath the fleece of a sheep,
Strikes me with terror, far more than three-headed
Cerberus' throat.

Fearfully watching we stand.
When? How? Where will it burst,
The deep-brooding storm
Of a malice so vile?

And thou, too, instead of words freighted with comfort,
Tempered with kindness, and lulling as Lethe,
Summonest forth from the past recollections
Of all that is evil, ignoring the good,
Nor only the sheen of the Present
Darken'st with shadows, but also
The delicate dawn of a future,
Illumed with the sunshine of Hope.

Silence! silence!
That the soul of our mistress,
Even now in the act to take flight,
May linger, still firmly may cleave to
That form, of all forms the divinest,
Which ever the sunshine beheld.

[HELENA *revives, and again stands up in the midst of her attendants.*

PHORKYAS.

Forth from clouds of fleeting vapour come, this day's
resplendent sun,
Veiled, thy glories woke our rapture, dazzling now thy
radiance shines!
As the world before thee kindles, look forth thou with
gracious eyes.
Though they rail on me as hideous, what is beauty well
I know.

HELENA.

Heart-sick from the void I totter, which possessed my
swimming brain.
Oh, how gladly would I rest me, — for my limbs are
weary-sore!
Yet beseems it queens, yea, truly, it beseems all mortals
well,
With a bold and tranquil spirit to abide all threatened
ill.

PHORKYAS.

Standing in thy might before us, standing in thy beauty
there,
Tells thine eye, command befits thee. What dost thou
command me? Speak!

HELENA.

To retrieve the moments wasted in your wrangling
straight prepare!
Haste! arrange a sacrifice, as the King commanded me.

PHORKYAS.

All within the house is ready, patera, tripod, hatchet
keen,
For besprinkling, for befuming; say, what shall the
victim be?

HELENA.

That the King disclosed not.

PHORKYAS.

Spake he not of that? Oh, word of woe!

HELENA.

Why this grief, that overcomes thee?

PHORKYAS.

Queen, thou art the victim meant.

HELENA.

I?

PHORKYAS.

And these.

CHORUS.

Oh, woe and wailing!

PHORKYAS.

Thou shalt fall beneath the axe.

HELENA.

Fearful! Yet my heart foretold it!

PHORKYAS.

No escape can I descry.

CHORUS.

Oh! And we! What will befall us?

PHORKYAS.

She shall die a noble death;
But upon the lofty rafter that supports the roof within,
Ye, like thrushes in the birding-time, shall flutter in a row.

[HELENA *and* CHORUS *stand astounded and horror-struck in an expressive and well-studied group.*

Poor spectres! There ye stand like images of stone,
Afeared to quit the day, the day which is not yours.
Mankind, that are no more than spectres, even as you,
Bid to the sun, like you, reluctantly farewell;
Yet prayer nor mortal might can wrest them from their doom:
All know the end must come; yet few can welcome it.
Enough! Your fate is sealed. So to the task at once!

[*Claps her hands; thereupon masked dwarfish figures appear at the portal, who actively carry into execution her orders as they are delivered.*

Approach, ye dusky, round, unsightly atomies,
Trundle yourselves along, here's mischief rare afoot.
The altar horned with gold, a place for it prepare,
Upon the silver rim the gleaming hatchet lay;
The water-pitchers fill, of them we shall have need,
To wash the pitchy gore's unsightly stains away.
Spread here upon the dust the tissued carpet fine,
That so the victim down right royally may kneel,
And coiled within its folds, head shorn from trunk, but still
With all due grace, may to the sepulchre be borne!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Absorbed in thought, apart my royal mistress stands,
Her maidens droop and blench like meadow-grass that's mown;
Yet seemeth it to me, the eldest, not unmeet

With thee to parley, that in primal eld wert born.
Experienced, sage thou art, to us seem'st well disposed,
Though yonder brainless crew assailed thee with contempt.
Then say, if chance of rescue any thou dost know.

PHORKYAS.

Not hard is that to say; but with the queen it rests
To liberate herself, and you her train with her.
But then decision lacks, and of the promptest too.

CHORUS.

Most to be revered of Parcæ, wisest of the Sibyls thou,
Folded keep the golden shears, and life and weal to us proclaim,
For we feel already wavering, swinging, dangling, undelightsome,
Our poor little limbs, that rather in the dance of yore delighted,
And in lover's soft embrace.

HELENA.

Leave these to their laments! Grief do I feel — no fear!
Yet if escape thou know'st, my gratitude be thine!
To wise far-seeing souls even the impossible
Oft possible appears. Then speak — thy plan reveal!

CHORUS.

Speak, and tell us, tell us quickly; how shall we eschew the dismal
Loathsome noose, that waits, oh, horror, like a carcanet detested,
Round our necks to coil? Already, luckless wretches, we can feel it,

Twisting, stifling, choking, if thou, Rhea, mother high
and mighty
Of the gods, relentest not.

PHORKYAS.

Have ye the patience then, in peace to list a plan
Of somewhat tedious length? Its turns are manifold.

CHORUS.

Abundant patience! So that listening we shall live.

PHORKYAS.

The man who keeps at home, guarding great store of
wealth,
And pargetting his mansion's walls from time to time,
His roof securing too against the battering rain,
With him it shall go well through length of many
days;
But he that overleaps with mad and fickle haste
His threshold's sacred bounds, nor ever stays to think,
On his return will find the ancient place, indeed,
But topsy-turvy all, even if not wholly wrecked.

HELENA.

Why these trite saws at such a time as this? Thou
wert
To tell thy tale. Stir not what only serves to gall!

PHORKYAS.

I mentioned facts. Reproach was never in my thought.
King Menelaus swept the seas from bay to bay;
Mainland and isles, on all he swooped, and spoiled
their wealth,
Which hither he brought back, and yonder is it stored.

Ten tedious years before the walls of Troy he spent,
How many to come home it passeth me to tell.
But how stand matters here the while at Tyndarus'
High mansion? How with all his territories round?

HELENA.

Is sarcasm, then, in thee so thoroughly ingrained,
Thou canst not ope thy lips, unless to gibe and rail?

PHORKYAS.

Thus many a long year was the mountain-glen forlorn,
Which north from Sparta to the upper lands extends
Behind Taygetus, where rolls Eurotas down,
A merry prattling brook, and thence along our vale
Spreads out among the reeds, which shield your favourite swans.
Among the mountains there, a bold and stalwart race,
Forth issuing from Cimmerian night, their quarters fixed,
And there a tower-girt keep impregnable have reared,
From which they harry land and people when they list.

HELENA.

How could they so? That were impossible, methinks.

PHORKYAS.

Most ample time they had, some twenty years, or so.

HELENA.

Is there one chief? Or a confederate robber-band?

PHORKYAS.

No robbers they, yet one they as their chief obey.
I blame him not, not I, though hither once he came.

He might have plundered all, yet was content with some
Few things, free gifts he called them, tribute not at all.

HELENA.

How looks he?

PHORKYAS.

Not amiss! Agreeable, say I.
A man he is of parts, quick-witted, handsome, bold,
Endowed with gifts of soul, like few among the Greeks.
They call the race Barbarians, yet of them, methinks,
Not one so savage is, as at beleaguered Troy
Heaps of your man-devouring heroes proved themselves.
He's truly great; myself I trusted in his hands.
And then his castle, that you for yourself should see!
Far other thing it is than that rude boulder-work,
Your ancestors, poor botchers, crudely huddled up
Like Cyclops, Cyclop fashion, rude amorphous crag
On crag amorphous heaving; there, believe me, there
Is all symmetrical, and shaped by square and rule.
Look on it from without! High up to heaven it soars,
So straight, so closely jointed, mirror-smooth as steel.
To clamber there — why even the very thought slides down.
Within, again, are halls and spacious courts, begirt
With mason-work substantial, every sort and kind.
Pilaster, pillar, arch, and spandril there you see,
Balconies, galleries, for looking out and in,
And scutcheons.

HELENA.

Scutcheons! What are scutcheons?

PHORKYAS.

Ajax bore
A wreathèd snake, yourselves have seen it, on his shield.
The Seven that 'leaguered Thebes bore carved devices too,

Each on his shield had one, of sense symbolical.
There moon and stars were seen in the great vault of heaven,
There goddess, hero, ladder, torches, swords withal,
And whatsoever else threats cities fair with doom.
Even such devices, too, our band of heroes bears,
In colours bright, from their great-grandsires handed down.
There lions, eagles, claws and beaks ye may behold,
The horns of buffaloes, wings, roses, peacocks' tails,
With bandelets of gold, black, silver, blue, and red;
Such matters, row on row, are on the walls uphung,
In never-ending halls, as spacious as the world.
Rare places these to dance!

CHORUS.

Say, be there dancers there?

PHORKYAS.

Ay, of the best! A gay and gold-locked buxom crew;
All redolent of youth! Such as was Paris, when
He came too near our queen.

HELENA.

Again thou fallest quite
Out of thy part; proceed, and bring it to a close!

PHORKYAS.

That thou shalt do, so thou pronounce a serious "Yes!"
Then with that castle straight will I surround thee.

CHORUS.

Speak
Oh, speak the little word, and save thyself and us!

HELENA.

What cause have I to fear King Menelaus should
With cruelty so fell desire to work me woe?

PHORKYAS.

Hast thou forgot how thy Deiphobus of yore,
The slaughtered Paris' brother, in unheard-of wise
He mangled, him that made thy widowhood his prey,
And rifled all thy charms; his nose and ears he slit,
And maimed him so beside, 'twas dismal to behold.

HELENA.

This to that churl he did; for my sake was it done.

PHORKYAS.

Because of that same churl he'll do the same to thee.
Beauty may not be shared; who once hath owned it all,
He sooner than participate, will end it quite.
[*Trumpets in the distance. The* CHORUS *huddle together.*
As the shrill trumpet's blast doth ear and bowels pierce
With shattering shock, even so strikes jealousy its claws
Into the bosom of the man who ne'er forgets
What on a time was his, and now is his no more.

CHORUS.

Heard'st thou not the trumpets pealing? Saw'st thou not the armour gleam?

PHORKYAS.

Welcome, welcome, Lord and Monarch, gladly I will give account!

CHORUS.

Ay, but we?

PHORKYAS.

You know full surely, you shall here her death behold.
There within your own must follow; no, there is no
help for you. [*Pause.*

HELENA.

I have resolved the course befits me to pursue.
That thou a demon art of power unblest, I feel,
And fear thou canst convert e'en good itself to ill.
Yet first of all I will go with thee to this keep;
What rests beyond I know; but what of after plans
The queen within her breast in mystery may veil,
Be undivulged to all. Now, beldam, lead the way!

CHORUS.

Oh, how gladly we go hence, with
Hurrying foot!
Behind us is Death,
Once more before us
A fortress's high
And impregnable walls.
Oh, may they shield us well,
As well as Ilion's ramparts,
Which only by grovelling cunning
At length in the dust were laid low!
[*Mists arise and conceal first the background, then the front of the scene.*
How! How is this!
Sisters, look round!
Was it not radiant day?
Trailing vapours are rising
From the sacred stream of Eurotas;

Already hath faded its beautiful
Rush-covered margin from view,
And the sportive, the gracefully haughty
Swans, that swim hither and thither,
Moving in soft undulation,
Ah, I behold them no more!

Yet, yet there
Singing I hear them,
Singing a shrill song afar!
Omen of death, says the legend,
Oh, grant that it may not betoken,
Instead of the rescue was promised,
To us, too, only destruction,
To us that are swanlike and tall,
Fair and white-throated, and ah!
To her, too, our swan-born mistress!
Woe and disaster! woe, woe!

Everything now
Around us is shrouded in mist.
Yet we see not each other! Oh, what,
What will befall? Are we moving?
Or are we hovering only
With stumbling footsteps on earth?
See'st thou nought? Is that Hermes flits yonder
Before us? Is that not his golden
Staff waving, commanding us back
To Hades, the joyless, the dusky,
That teemeth with bodiless phantoms,
O'erthronged, yet evermore void?
Yes, at once the darkness thickens, not a ray illumes the vapour,
Gray and dusky, dungeon-gloomy. Walls before our gaze are rising,
Stark before our open gaze. A courtyard is't, or yawning cavern?

Whether this or that, 'tis fearful! Sisters, sisters, we
are captives,
Captives as we were before.

[*Inner court of the Castle, surrounded by rich fantastic structures in the style of the Middle Ages.*

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Foolish and over-swift, true woman as ye are!
Dependent on the instant, sport of every gust
Of good or evil fortune, neither have ye wit
To await with even mind. One evermore gainsays
The other, and the other her with fiery heat.
In joy and woe alike you only laugh and wail.
Now silence! And await attentive what our queen's
High soul may here resolve both for herself and us.

HELENA.

Where art thou, Pythoness? Whatever be thy name,
Come forth, I say, from this grim castle's gloomy
vaults!
Mayhap thou'rt gone to tell this wondrous hero-lord
That I am here, and my reception fair bespeak.
Then take my thanks, and lead me to him with all
haste.
Oh, for a period to my wanderings! — oh, for peace!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

In vain thou look'st, oh, queen, around on every side;
The uncouth shape has vanished, or, perchance, remained
In yonder mist, from forth whose bosom we came here,
I wist not how, swiftly, yet never stirring foot.
Or else, perchance, she roams the labyrinthine maze
Of this strange castle framed of many blent in one,
Seeking fair princely greeting for us from its lord.

Yet see, above there stirs, on busy errands bent,
At casements, and through corridors and portals wide,
A throng of servants, moving swiftly to and fro.
Reception cordial this, and courteous doth portend.

CHORUS.

My heart bounds within me! Oh, only look yonder,
How gracefully downwards, with hurrying footsteps,
Yon bevy of loveliest youths are advancing
In measured array! By whose order, I marvel,
Appear they thus early, all decked in their trim,
This glorious muster of beautiful youths?
What most claims my wonder? Their bearing so graceful,
The tresses that curl round their foreheads of snow,
Or the bloom of their cheeks that outrival the peach,
And are clothed like the peach with a delicate down?
Full fain would I bite, did I shrink not with fear,
For lips that aforetime such morsel attempted,
Oh, fearful to think on, with ashes were filled!

But lo! now the fairest
Approach to our feet.
What is it they bear?
Steps for a throne.
Carpets and seat,
Curtain and hangings,
In tent-like array,
Like clouds interlacing,
That circle and wave o'er
The head of our queen:
For already hath she
On their invitation
Ascended the gorgeous throne.
Forward! And round her,
Stepping in measure,
Range in a row!

Worthy, oh, worthy, trebly worthy,
Be blest such a welcome as this!

[*After the pages and squires have descended in long procession,* FAUST *appears at the top of the staircase in a knight's court-dress of the Middle Ages, and descends slowly and with dignity.*

PANTHALIS (*regarding him attentively*).

If that the gods have not, as ofttimes they have done,
For but some little space, a form of wondrous mould,
A gracious presence, and an air of lofty grace,
Unto this mortal lent, he will be prosperous
In all that he essays, — or battling, man with man,
Or in that puny war with beauteous woman waged;
In sooth to all men else he is superior far,
However dear to fame, whom e'er mine eyes beheld.
Majestical and slow, with reverential air,
The prince approaches; turn, and greet him, oh, my queen!

FAUST (*advances with a man in chains at his side*).

Instead of stateliest greeting, as were meet,
Instead of reverent welcome, lo, I bring,
In gyves fast bound, a varlet who, remiss
Himself, hath made me fail in duty too.
Kneel down, and here at this sweet lady's feet
Lay the confession of thy heavy guilt.
This, oh, most puissant empress, is the man
Of lynx-keen eye, appointed to keep watch
Upon our topmost turret, thence to scan
The canopy of heaven, the earth's expanse,
And note whate'er is to be noted there, —
What from the mountains to our castle here
May cross the valley, be they jostling herds,

Or banded hosts in arms; we guard the one,
The other we oppose. To-day, oh, shame!
He noted not thy coming; so there lacks
The welcome stately, and the homage due
To guest so noble. Forfeit is his life,
A double forfeit; he had lain ere this
In his most guilty blood, but only thou
Mayst punish or forgive, as likes thee best.

HELENA.

The lofty honour thou accordest me,
As judge and mistress absolute, belike
Is meant to test how far I dare presume.
Thus, then, the judge's foremost duty I
Will exercise, and hear the culprit! Speak!

LYNCEUS, THE TOWER-WATCHER.

Let me kneel, and let me view thee,
Live or die, I reck not how!
For, oh, godlike woman, to thee
All my soul is bondslave now.

Watching for the morning's blushing,
Looking eastward, where it glows,
All at once with magic flushing
In the south the sun arose.

To itself my gaze it rooted;
Rocky pass, and valley green,
Earth and heaven, were all unnoted,
All save her, that peerless queen.

I with eyesight keen am dowered,
Keen as any lynx on tree,
But in vain I strove, o'erpowered
By that vision fair to see.

What to me portcullised gateway,
  What if roof or tower be kept?
Mists arise, fade off, and straightway
  Forth a radiant goddess stept!

Eye and soul I straight surrender,
  Drinking in the blissful light;
Dazzling all, her beauty's splendour
  Dazzles me, poor minion, quite!

I forgot the warder's duty,
  Quite forgot the trumpet call;
Menace, yet oh, spare me! Beauty
  Holds all angry thought in thrall

HELENA.

The evil to chastise myself have caused
Were most unmeet. Woe's me, what ruthless fate
Pursues me, that where'er I go I thus
Befool men's senses, so they not respect
Themselves, nor aught that's worthy! Now by force,
Now by seductive arts, by warfare now,
Now dragging me about from land to land,
Gods, heroes, demigods, yea, demons too,
Have made my life one wild and errant maze.
I sowed confusion o'er the world; — it grew,
And now it spreads, confounded worse and worse.
Remove this worthy man and set him free;
Light never harm on him the gods have crazed.

FAUST.

Lost in amazement I behold, oh, queen,
The smiter and the smitten here together.
I see the bow that sped the arrow forth,
And him it struck. Shaft follows thick on shaft,

And me they pierce. Methinks, they seem to whizz
Around in hall and tower on every hand.
What am I now? Thou in a moment mak'st
My trustiest vassals rebels, insecure
My very walls; so now I fear my hosts
Obey the conquering and unconquered fair.
What's left me then, save to resign to thee
Myself and all I fondly dreamed was mine.
Here let me at thy feet, thy liegeman true,
Proclaim thee queen, whose presence, only seen,
Won thee at once my throne and its domains.

LYNCEUS (*returns with a chest, followed by men carrying other chests*).

See me, once more, oh, queen, advance!
The rich man begs one little glance;
He looks on thee, and feels, be sure,
As monarch rich, as beggar poor.

What was I erst? What am I now?
What shall I do or wish or vow?
What boots the eye's most piercing ken?
Back from thy throne it shrinks again.

Out from the East our course we pressed,
And soon were masters of the West;
A throng of warriors long and vast,
The first knew nothing of the last.

The first was slain, the second stood,
The third struck in, a spearman good;
And still their numbers waxed amain,
Unnoted were the myriads slain.

We rushed, we crushed, we stormed apace,
We were the lords from place to place;

And where to-day I bore control,
Ere morn another sacked and stole.

We looked, and rapid was the look,
And one the fairest damsel took,
Another seized the sturdy steer,
The horses all were lifted clear.

But I in peering took delight,
For all that rarest is to sight,
And what another's too might be
Was only withered grass to me.

I tracked where treasures lay concealed,
And all my piercing glance revealed;
To all recesses I could spy,
No coffers might exclude mine eye.

And heaps of gold were piled by me.
And gems most glorious to see,
But none of all were fit to shine,
Save emerald, on that breast of thine.

Then o'er thy brow let pearlins strung,
The spoil of ocean's caves, be hung;
The ruby's fire grows faint and weak
Beside the crimson of thy cheek.

And so these treasures rich and rare
Unto thy throne I proudly bear,
And at thy feet the harvest lay
Of many a long and bloody fray.

And many though these coffers be,
Yet coffers many more have we;
Deign but to speak thy gracious will,
And treasure vaults for thee I'll fill.

For scarce dost thou the throne ascend,
When instantly in homage bend
Our reason, wealth, and all that's ours,
Before thy beauty's matchless powers.

All this I deemed securely mine,
But now surrender, it is thine, —
All this high-worthy once I thought,
But now I see that it was nought.

What I possessed away hath flown,
Like withered grass that hath been mown.
Oh, with one gracious look restore
The virtue that it owned before!

FAUST.

Hence with the burden by your valour won,
Unchid indeed, but unrewarded too!
Already hers is all this castle holds,
'Tis bootless to present particular gifts.
Away! And pile in orderly array
Treasure on treasure! Rear a structure grand
Of pomp till now unseen! Let every arch
Shine like the heavens at morning-break! Create
From lifeless life a paradise around!
Let carpet heaped on carpet, thick with flowers,
Unroll before her; all that meets her tread
Be delicate, and splendours so divine,
Might dazzle all but gods, allure her eye!

LYNCEUS.

Poor and trivial is at best
This our gracious lord's behest:
Greeting such to work for thee
Will the servant's pastime be;

For our life and goods and all
Thy resistless charms enthrall.
Is not every warrior tame,
Every falchion blunt and lame?
Near that form of glorious mould,
Even the sun is dull and cold;
Near the wonders of that face
All is drear, and all is base. [*Exit.*

HELENA (*to* FAUST).

I would hold converse with thee; — come thou up,
And sit here by my side! The vacant place
Invites its master, and secures me mine.

FAUST.

First, kneeling, noble lady, let me crave
Thy grace for my true homage; let me kiss
The hand which thus would raise me to thy side.
Confirm me as co-regent with thyself
Of realms whose bounds were never scanned, and win
Adorer, vassal, guardian all in one!

HELENA.

Marvels so many do I see, and hear,
I'm all amaze, and fain would question much.
Prithee resolve me, wherefore rang the speech
Of yonder man so strangely, — strange, yet sweet?
Each tone into the other seems to fit,
And, when one word is wedded to the ear,
A second comes to dally with the first.

FAUST.

If that our people's speech delight thee, how
Their song will ravish, through their inmost depths
Steeping thine ear and spirit in content!

To make it ours, let us this art essay;
Converse invites, and calls it into play.

HELENA.

Say, how to words such grace I may impart?

FAUST.

'Tis easy; they must flow out from the heart.
And, when the soul is touched with passion's flame,
We look around and ask —

HELENA.

Who burns the same?

FAUST.

Nor past nor future now the soul employ,
The present only —

HELENA.

Constitutes our joy.

FAUST.

'Tis treasure, glorious gain, supreme command.
Who gives it confirmation?

HELENA.

This — my hand.

CHORUS.

Who shall taunt our mistress, that she
To this castle's lord demeans her
With a loving grace?
For what are we, every one,

What but captives, now and ofttime,
Since Troy's shameful overthrow,
And our labyrinthine roamings
Thence in woful wise?

Women with men's love familiar
Dally never in their choice,
In such lore proficient;
And as to golden-locked shepherds,
It may be, to black-bearded fauns
They, as it haps for the moment,
Over their delicate limbs
The self-same privilege yield.

Near and nearer already they sit,
Each on the other reclining,
Shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee;
Hand in hand they are swaying
Over the throne's
Deep-cushioned lordliness.
No scruple hath royalty, thus
Its secret delights
To the gaze of the people
With never a blush to reveal.

HELENA.

I feel so far away, and yet so near,
And oh! how gladly say — Here am I — here.

FAUST.

Scarce do I breathe. I tremble, heart and knee;
'Tis all a dream. Time, place, have ceased to be.

HELENA.

Meseems as I had lived in olden time,
And yet were now new-budding in my prime;

Inwoven with thine my being seems to be,
Bound to thy stranger life eternally.

FAUST.

Oh, ponder not! To quaff the present bliss,
Though death were at the gate, our duty is.

PHORKYAS (*running in*).

Prattle in Love's alphabet,
Billing, cooing, toying — yet
Time it is aside were set
All such childish gear.
Feel ye not the tempest louring?
Hark the trumpet's bray! O'erpowering
Ruin draweth near.
Menelaus, with his bands,
Storming at your portal stands.
Arm for conflict drear!
By these victors girdled, you
Like maimed Deiphobus shall rue
Your bondage to the sex.
These light goods shall swing in halter,
And for her upon the altar
Lies the new-ground axe!

FAUST.

Accurst intrusion! Most unseasonable now!
Not even in peril can I senseless brawling brook.
Ill favour from ill news the goodliest bearer takes;
And these, vile hag! alone 'tis thy delight to bear.
Yet shall they stead thee nothing here; — with empty breath
Thou dost assail the air. No peril, none, is here,
And peril's self would seem but idle threat, — no more.

[*Signals, explosions from the turrets, trumpets and horns, warlike music. A mighty host marches across the stage.*

No! Straightway thou a throng of lances,
Each by a hero borne, shalt see;
He only merits woman's glances,
Who can protect her valiantly.
[*To the leaders, who detach themselves from the columns, and advance toward him.*

With fiery, yet self-reinèd power,
That makes your victory sure, go forth,
Ye of the East the prime and flower,
Ye budding blossoms of the North.

In steel encased, where'er they enter,
Empire on empire up they break,
They come, earth trembles to her centre,
They pass, and thunders fill their wake.

It was at Pylos that we landed,
The aged Nestor was no more!
And all the petty kinglets banded
Our dauntless host to ruin bore.

Now from these walls with force of thunder
Drive Menelaus back to sea!
There let him rove, and sack, and plunder,
Such was his choice and destiny!

Dukes shall I hail you, — grace's fountain,
Great Sparta's queen hath so decreed;
Now at her feet lay vale and mountain,
And you shall have a realm for meed.

With rampart piled, and high-banked galleys,
Thou, German, Corinth's bays defend!
Achaia with its hundred valleys
I to thy keeping, Goth, commend.

To Elis let the Franks betake them,
  The Saxon make Messene his,
Lords of the sea the Normans make them,
  And raise to glory Argolis!

Then each, in joy at home abiding,
  Shall wield an honoured rule abroad,
Yet Sparta shall, o'er all presiding,
  Be, as of yore, our queen's abode!

For each and all in long endurance
  One general weal is thus in store;
At *her* feet shall ye seek assurance,
  And light and justice evermore.
[FAUST *descends, the princes form a circle round him to receive his instructions and commands.*

CHORUS.

The man, who the Fairest would win and keep,
Foremost of all should see
That of weapons he has good store.
Though by fond arts he should make his own
What upon earth is the prize supreme,
Yet he possesseth it not in peace.
Fawning and flattery lure her from him,
Reivers audaciously snatch her away.
Against such wrong let him well provide!

Therefore do I our prince extol.
Prize him more highly than all men else,
Prudence with valour commingling so
That stalwart vassals submissive stand,
Watching his every nod.
Faithfully they his behests fulfil,
And each his proper advantage finds,
They in their master's liberal guerdon,
Both in achievement of loftiest fame.

For who shall ravish her now
From her potent possessor?
To him she belongs, — to him we resign her;
Resign her with twofold good-will, for he
With her hath encompassed ourselves,
Within, with impregnable walls,
And with an invincible host, without.

FAUST.

The gifts we here on these amass,
  To each a goodly kingdom's thrall,
Are great and glorious. Let them pass!
  We hold our station 'midst them all.

With emulous pride they'll guard thee round,
  Half-island, girdled by the main,
To Europe's mountain-ridges bound
  By hills inwoven in slender chain.

Oh, may this land, of all the fairest,
  From age to age be ever blest!
'Tis thine, my queen! Again thou bearest
  The sway by thee of yore possessed.

When from the shell thou burst resplendent
  Amidst Eurotas' sedges green,
Thy mother and her maids attendant
  Were dazzled by the radiant sheen.

This glorious land, intent to woo thee,
  With all its treasures courts thy hand;
Though all earth's round pertaineth to thee,
  Oh, tarry with thy fatherland!

And though the sunbeams coldly play, and drearly,
  Upon its jaggèd mountain-summits frore,

Though 'midst the green the rocks peer forth austerely,
Where nibbling goats collect their scanty store,

Yet mingling brooklets brawl, and welling fountains
And dell and slope and meadow, green are they,
And o'er the verdure of a hundred mountains
We see the fleecy herds far spreading stray;

See by the beetling cliffs the cattle marching,
With measured pace and wary, one by one;
Yet doth the rock, in hundred caverns arching,
From tempest yield them shelter or from sun.

Pan shields them there, and there, from moss-clefts peering,
And boskage cool and dewy, wood-nymphs be,
And high in air their struggling branches rearing,
As for the sun athirst, crowds tree on tree.

Primeval woods! The oak, in strength excelling,
In jags and knots its gnarlèd boughs distorts;
The gentle maple, with sweet juices swelling,
Sweeps far aloft, and with its burden sports.

And milk in still and shady pastures floweth
For child or lamb, maternal drink to them,
And fruit hard by, the plains' ripe bounty, groweth,
And honey trickles from the hollowed stem.

Here cloudless bliss, from sire to son descending,
Makes cheek and lip alike serene and clear,
Each owneth in his sphere a life unending,
And health and sweet content dwell ever here.

And so, to all its father's strength expanding,
The infant grows beneath the pure bright day,

And at the sight amazed we pause, demanding
If these be gods, or men of mortal clay.

Thus 'mong the shepherds seemed the young Apollo
A shepherd, only than the rest more fair,
For all created things one impulse follow,
Where Nature doth untrammelled empire bear.
[*Sits down beside* HELENA.

So thou and I, our souls from bondage freeing,
Shall dwell in peace, the past behind us thrown;
Oh, feel, 'twas Jove supreme that gave thee being;
Thou 'longst to earth's first golden age alone.

Thou shall not be bound in by rock-built towers!
Still in immortal youth Arcadia smiles
For us, and o'er us spreads her blissful bowers,
Here neighbouring close on Sparta's household piles.

O'er this thrice happy land to reign its queen would
Earth's brightest destiny to thee ensure!
Now be these thrones transformed to arching greenwood,
And free our joys as Arcady's and pure!
[*The scene is entirely changed. A range of grottoes abuts upon arbours thickly covered with leaves. A shady grove extends to the base of the rocks which enclose the place.* FAUST *and* HELENA *are not seen. The* CHORUS *lying asleep, dispersed up and down.*

PHORKYAS.

How long these maidens here have slept, I cannot tell,
Or in their dreams if they have seen what I beheld
Before my waking eyes, as little do I know.
I'll wake them, therefore. These young folks shall be amazed;

You, too, ye bearded ones, that sit beneath and wait,
To these strange goings-on in hopes to find the clue.
Up, up! Arise, and shake your tresses from your brows,
And slumber from your eyes! Blink not, but list to me!

CHORUS.

Only speak! Say on, and tell us all the marvels thou hast witnessed,
Gladliest would we list to legends that would sorest tax our credence;
For our souls are very weary, gazing on these rocks around.

PHORKYAS.

How! Already weary, children, though you scarce have rubbed your eyes?
Hearken then! Within these caverns, grots, and leafy bowers umbrageous,
To our lord and to our lady, as to two Idyllic lovers,
Shield and shelter have been granted.

CHORUS.

How! Within there?

PHORKYAS.

Yes — Sequestered
From the world, to secret tendance me and me alone they summoned.
Highly honoured stood I near them; yet, as confidante beseemeth,
I looked round at other matters; hither, thither I betook me,
Culling mosses, roots, and barks, in all their properties conversant,
So that they were left alone.

CHORUS.

Thou wouldst have us think, that in there quite a little world is hidden,
Wood and meadow, lake and river! Pretty fables thou dost weave!

PHORKYAS.

Simple sooth, ye inexperienced! There be depths were never trodden:
Halls on halls, and courts on courts, enwrapt in musings deep I traversed,
When at once a peal of laughter echoed through the vaults cavernous.
I look in, a boy is bounding from a woman to a man,
From his father to his mother; the caressing and the fondling,
All love's silly play and banter, shouts of glee and sportive babbling,
Interchanging stun me quite.
He, a wingless genius, naked, faun-like save in what is bestial,
To the solid earth leaps down, but straight the earth reverberating,
Up into the ether shoots him, till thus, twice or thrice rebounding,
He has touched the arching roof.
Full of terror calls the mother, "Bound as much as e'er thou willest,
But forbear to think of flying, — flying is to thee forbid."
And the faithful father counsels, — "In the earth the power abideth,
That impels thee upwards. — Only with thy tiptoe touch its surface,
Like the son of Earth, Antæus, straightway is thy strength renewed."

So along the rocky ledges bounds he on from peak to ridge,
Hither, thither, back and forward, like a stricken ball in play!
But at once within the fissure of a chasm he sank and vanished,
And it seemed as we had lost him; mother moaneth, sire consoleth,
I my shoulders shrugged in fear. When lo! again! what vision wondrous!
Treasures, were they hidden yonder? Garments, all with flowers embroidered,
He with seemly grace hath donned.
Tassels dangle from his elbows, bow-knots flutter on his bosom,
In his hand the golden lyre, quite a little Phœbus, gaily
To the edge of the o'erhanging rock he stepped; we stood astonished,
And his parents fell in raptures into one another's arms.
For about his brows what radiance! What gleams there is hard to tell.
Is it burnished gem, or is it flame of lordly might of soul?
And his port is high and noble, even as boy himself proclaiming
Lord to be of all that's lovely, whom the melodies eternal
Permeate through every fibre; and so ye anon shall hear him,
And so ye shall see him, and be in especial wonder wrapt!

CHORUS.

Call'st thou this marvellous,
Daughter of Creta?
Has never thine ear been lulled by
The beautiful lore of the poets?

Hast thou heard never Ionia's,
Never been tutored in Hellas's
Legends primæval, that teem with
Achievements of heroes and gods?

All that befalleth in these
Our days is only an echo,
Wailing and sad, of the glorious
Days of our far-away sires.
Not to compare is thy tale with
That which beautiful Fiction,
Than Truth more welcome to credence,
Hath chanted of Maia's son.

This gracefully moulded, yet lusty
Nursling, just newly begotten,
His bevy of gossiping nurses
Fold in pure fleecy swaddlings,
Deck with the richest adornings,
In their irrational way.
Sturdily, featly, however, the rogue
Slippeth his flexible
Body elastic
Out from the folds,
Craftily leaving the vesture of purple
That round him close was encinctured,
Quietly there in his stead,
Like the consummated butterfly,
Which, from the chrysalis torpid
Its pinions untrammelling, soareth,
Boldly at wild will careering
Through air all aglow with the sun.

So he, too, the lissomest, nimblest,
That he to thieves and to cozeners,
Yea, to all that on profit are bent,
The favouring genius would be,

Instantly proved by the practice
Of all the most dexterous arts.
Straight from the monarch of ocean he filches
His trident, yea, even from Ares
His falchion purloins from its sheath,
His arrows and bow from Apollo,
And eke from Hephæstos his pincers;
Even Jove's, the dread father's, own bolts he
Had ta'en, had the flashes not scared him;
Eros himself in the grapple
Of limbs interlacing he threw,
And from Cypria's bosom the Cestus,
The while she caressed him, he stole.

[*A delightful strain of pure melody, as if from a lyre, is heard from the cavern; all are arrested by the sound, and appear thrilled to the soul. From this point to the pause, which is noted below, the progress of the scene is accompanied by a full band.*

PHORKYAS.

Hark, the glorious tones! In fable
Old and faded trust no more!
Your old throng of gods unstable,
Let them pass, their reign is o'er!

Men again shall know them never,
Higher faith their souls must fill;
From the heart must well whatever
Is upon the heart to thrill.

[*Retires toward the cliffs.*

CHORUS.

If, dread being, these soft-soothing
Strains can thus incline thine ears,
They create fresh-budding youth in
Us, dissolved in sweetest tears.

What though heaven's great sun be clouded,
So within our soul it live?
In our own hearts lies enshrouded
More than all the world can give.

HELENA, FAUST, EUPHORION *in the costume above described.*

EUPHORION.

Children's tones, their carols singing,
Seem your own mirth's voice to be;
Seeing me in cadence springing,
Leaps your heart in tune with me.

HELENA.

Mortal life with bliss to flavour
Love links Two in union sweet,
But, that it of heaven may savour,
Makes with Three the bond complete.

FAUST.

Thus is all we longed for ended,
I am thine, and mine art thou;
And our beings so are blended,
May we ever be as now!

CHORUS.

For this pair long years of pleasure
In this fair and gracious boy
Gathered are in golden measure;
In their union how I joy!

EUPHORION.

Now let me gambol,
Now let me spring!

Up to yon cloudland
I would take wing, —
I would be soaring
Aloft on the gale.

FAUST.

Oh, from these frantic
Flights let me call thee,
Lest misadventure
And ruin befall thee,
And our own darling
Plunge us in wail!

EUPHORION.

Earth shall not fetter me
Longer from air.
Let go my hands now,
Let go my hair,
Let go my garments,
They're mine — let me free!

HELENA.

Think, oh, bethink thee,
To whom thou belongest, —
Think how thou grievest us,
Grievest and wrongest,
Bursting the bond unites
Him, thee, and me!

CHORUS.

Soon sundered, I fear me,
The union will be.

FAUST *and* HELENA.

For our love, who adore thee,
Restrain, oh, my child,
Restrain, we implore thee,
These impulses wild!
Orderly, tranquilly,
Trip o'er the plain.

EUPHORION.

But to content ye,
Will I refrain.

[*Winding in and out among the* CHORUS, *and compelling them to dance with him.*

Cheerily I foot it
Through this bevy bright!
Does the measure suit it?
Is the motion right?

HELENA.

Yes, 'tis bravely footed. Twine
With these comely maidens mine
In the roundel gay!

FAUST.

Would the end were come! Oh, me!
All this madcap revelry
Fills me with dismay.

[EUPHORION *and* CHORUS, *dancing and singing, move about in interlacing roundels.*

CHORUS.

When thou thine arms in air
Gracefully crossest;
When thou thy sunny hair
Dancest and tossest;

When trips thy foot so light
Over the meadow bright;
When thy limbs come and go
Lightsomely to and fro, —
Then thou thy goal hast gained,
Beautiful boy!
All hearts, to thee enchained,
Make thee their joy. [*Pause.*

EUPHORION.

Hinds ye resemble,
That frolic and speed,
Sportive and nimble,
Over the mead;
I am the huntsman,
Ye are the game.

CHORUS.

Wouldst thou o'ertake us,
Make but the trial,
Blest would it make us —
Vain were denial —
Might we but fondle
Thy beautiful frame!

EUPHORION.

Now o'er brake and bramble,
Rock and thicket ramble!
What's easy of capture, it
Liketh not me;
To give me true rapture, it
Fought for must be.

HELENA *and* FAUST.

What waywardness! What mad caprices!
Nought his headlong course can rein!

Hark! Can these be hunting horns,
Ringing over wood and plain?
Shrieks! and still the din increases!

CHORUS (*running in one by one*).

Shooting past us like the breezes,
Daffing us aside in scorn,
He our wildest sister seizes,
And by him she's hither borne.

EUPHORION (*enters, carrying a young girl in his arms*).

Here I bring the maiden coy,
To enforce my hard-won joy;
Now to make me fully blest,
Thus I clasp her struggling breast,
Kiss her shrinking lips that she
Both my power and will may see.

GIRL.

Let me go! This frame of mine, too,
Holds a spirit bold and strong,
But it is not swept, like thine, too
Lightly by each gust along.
So! thou think'st thou hast me fairly!
Think'st thine arm has fixed its prey!
Hold me fast, fond boy, and rarely
I will scorch thee for my play.
[*She flames up and vanishes into air.*
Follow me to realms supernal,
Follow me to caves infernal,
Win the prize, if win you may!

EUPHORION (*shaking off the last of the flames*).

Forest brake and greenwood tree
Stifle here, by crags o'erhung;

Are they to fetter me?
I am lusty yet, and young.
Yonder the wild wind raves,
Thundering roll the waves;
Both afar I hear them,
Would I were near them!
[*He continues to spring upwards from rock to rock.*

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Wouldst thou match the mountain goat?
We are thrilled for fear of thee.

EUPHORION.

Ever higher must I float,
Ever farther must I see.
Now where I am, I know;
There lie the isles below.
Yes, yes, I am in
The midst of the land
Of Pelops, akin
To both ocean and strand.

CHORUS.

If rock and forest wold
Cannot allure thee,
Apples with cheeks of gold
We shall ensure thee,
Figs, and, in alleys spanned,
Vines on the mountain-side.
Oh, in this darling land,
Darling, abide!

EUPHORION.

Dream ye of peace's day?
Dream on who may!

War is the signal-cry,
Conquer or die!

CHORUS.

Who in peace would rekindle
War's terrible flame,
Shall see his hopes dwindle
In sorrow and shame.

EUPHORION.

All whom this soil in peril bore
To bear their part in perils more,
With spirits soaring and unslavish,
Of their own blood like water lavish,
All who shall battle with a soul
Illumined by a heaven-sent ray,
Which nought can quench and nought control,
A glorious guerdon win shall they!

CHORUS.

He mounts, he mounts! Yet in the farness
He shows undwindled to our gaze,
Like conqueror in battle harness,
And all in brass and steel ablaze.

EUPHORION.

Let not wall nor moat environ,
Each in self alone repose,
Ever is man's breast of iron
Surest stronghold 'gainst his foes.
Would ye live unvanquished ever,
Onwards to the battle-field,
Amazons your women, never
Child but bears a hero's shield!

CHORUS.

Oh, sacred poesy,
Heavenward thy soaring be!
Shine on, thou brightest star,
Afar, and still more afar,
Yet doth thy glorious strain
Visit us still, and fain
To hail it we are.

EUPHORION.

No, not like child's shall be my bearing;
The youth appears in armour dight,
Peer for the free, the strong, the daring,
His spirit braced to do the right.
Forth fare!
For there
The path to glory opens bright.

HELENA *and* FAUST.

Ushered scarce to life and gladness,
Scarce to day's resplendent beam,
Thou dost rush with giddy madness
Where dismay and danger teem.
Are then we
Nought to thee,
Is our gracious bond a dream?

EUPHORION.

Hark, hark, what thunder on the ocean?
Its echoes roll from dale to dale,
Host grappling host in fierce commotion,
Dust, tempest, war, and woe, and wail!
Death our doom,
Not with gloom,
But with welcome let us hail.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Oh, what horror! Agonising!
Is then death *thy* doom? Despair!

EUPHORION.

Should I hold back unsympathising?
No, every pang and grief I'll share.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Wilfulness peril brings,
Death-laden harms.

EUPHORION.

Ha! And a pair of wings
Shoots from my arms.
Away! I must venture thus!
Lift me in air!

[*He casts himself into the air, his garments support him for a moment; an aureola surrounds his head, and a train of light follows him.*

CHORUS.

Icarus! Icarus!
Woe and despair!

[*A beautiful youth falls at the parents' feet, and you think that in the dead young man you recognise a familiar form; when all at once the material part of his frame disappears, the aureola mounts to heaven like a comet, while the dress, mantle, and lyre remain upon the ground.*

HELENA *and* FAUST.

Soon mirth into anguish fades,
Joy into moan!

EUPHORION'S *voice from beneath.*

Let me not, mother, to the Shades
Descend alone! [*Pause.*

CHORUS. (*Dirge.*)

Not alone! Where'er thou bidest;
For to know thee still we trust.
Ah, though from the day thou glidest,
Hearts, that loved thee, ever must.
Dirges none we'll sing in sadness,
Enviously we chant thy fate!
Still thy song in grief or gladness,
Like thy soul, was fair and great.

Born to earthly bliss, most rarely
Gifted, of a race sublime,
Yet, alas! thy soul too early
Dropped its blossoms in their prime.
Thine a vision was divine, too,
Thine a heart that felt for all,
Noblest women's love was thine, too,
And a song most magical.

Yet didst thou in wild defiance,
Swayed by wayward impulse still,
Spurn at rule, and all compliance
With the laws that curb the will.
But thy higher soul, victorious,
Burst the bonds of passion through!
Thou didst seek the greatly glorious,
But couldst not attain it too.

Ah, who *does?* Forlorn inquiry,
That from fate wrings no reply,
When, on their day of anguish fiery,
The nations mute and gory lie.

Yet sing new songs in jocund measure,
And droop, in sorrow sunk, no more!
For earth again will these untreasure,
As she hath ever done of yore.
[*Full pause. The music ceases.*

HELENA (*to* FAUST).

An ancient saw, alas! approves itself in me —
That Bliss and Beauty ne'er enduringly are twined.
The bond of life is riven, and riven the bond of love;
Bewailing both I say a bitter-sad farewell!
And fling myself once more, yet once, into your arms.
Persephoneia, now receive my boy and me!
[*She embraces* FAUST, *her corporeal part vanishes, her dress and veil remain in his arms.*

PHORKYAS (*to* FAUST).

Hold fast by all the residue is left,
Let not the dress escape thee! Even now
Tug demons at its skirts, would sweep it fain
Off to the world below. Hold fast, I say!
'Tis not indeed the goddess thou hast lost,
Yet is the thing divine. Turn to account
Its priceless virtue, and ascend in air;
Swift o'er all common things 'twill bear thee on,
Wafted on ether, long as thou canst fly.
We meet again, far, very far from here.
[HELEN'S *garments dissolve into clouds, envelop* FAUST, *lift him into the air, and move away with him.*

PHORKYAS (*lifts up* EUPHORION'S *dress, mantle, and lyre, steps into the proscenium, and, holding up the exuviæ, says*)

Rare treasure-trove are these to view.
The flame has disappeared, 'tis true,

Yet is the world no whit the worse;
Here is enough to consecrate
A legion of the sons of verse,
To scatter envy, malice, hate
Amongst the poetaster crew;
And if to give them genius, too,
Surpass my power, at least confess,
I can supply them with the dress.
[*She sits down upon the proscenium, leaning against the base of a column.*

PANTHALIS.

Bestir ye, girls! At length we from the spell are free,
The old Thessalian hag's weird sorceries are o'er,
The jargon ceased of yonder intertangled tones,
That did the ear, and, worse, the inner sense confound.
To Hades now away! Our queen has hurried there
With sorrow-saddened tread. Let us, her faithful maids,
Where she has led the way, attend upon her path.
We'll find her at the throne of the Inscrutable.

CHORUS.

Queens, right royal, allwheres are they!
Even in Hades they fill the high places,
Haughtily with their peers consorting,
With Persephone mating as friends;
But we, in the far-away distance
Of slumbrous asphodel meadows,
Mated with long scraggy poplars,
With barren unbeautiful willows,
What pastime is ours or what pleasure?
Bat-like to pipe and to whistle,
Ungladsome, and ghost-like, and drear?

PANTHALIS.

Who hath nor fame achieved, nor nobly doth aspire,
Belongs but to the elements; so get ye gone!
My spirit burns to be with my dear queen once more;
'Tis not desert alone, but loyalty as well,
Perpetuates for us the individual life. [*Exit.*

ALL.

Back to the daylight given are we;
Persons, in sooth, no more,
We feel and we know it well,
But to Hades we never return.
Nature, the evermore-living,
Asserts on us spirits, as we do
On her, unimpeachable claim.

A PORTION OF THE CHORUS.

In the whispering thrill, the breezy waving of these thousand branches,
From the roots by soft endearments we shall woo life's flowing currents,
Up into the boughs; and soon with foliage, soon with teeming blossoms,
Decked profusely, shake our flowing tresses to the amourous breeze.
Falls the fruit, anon assemble swains and herds in throngs exulting,
Pressing, crowding swift and eager, of our bounties to possess them,
And they all bow down before us, as before the primal gods.

ANOTHER PORTION.

Floating o'er the polished mirror of these rocky walls far-gleaming,
Moving in soft undulations, we caressingly shall glide;

There to every sound we'll hearken, song of birds, or
shepherd's pipings;
If Pan's voice tremendous ringeth, straight we send an
answer back;
Rustling zephyrs we reëcho, — thunders it, we roll our
thunders,
Till the peals with doubling crash reverberate along
the hills.

A THIRD PORTION.

Sisters! Of more mobile spirit, onwards with the
brooks we hasten;
For the richly garnished ridges of yon distant moun-
tains lure us;
Downwards ever, ever downwards, we meandering shall
water
Now the uplands, now the meadows, now the garden
round the house.
There across the landscape, skyward soaring, the long
tapering summits
Of the cypress mark where flows our crystal mirror
'twixt its banks.

A FOURTH PORTION.

Ye may roam where'er it lists you; we shall circle, we
shall murmur,
Round yon planted hill, where greenly on the vine-
stock grows the vine;
There from hour to hour the toil of him that with a
feverish passion,
Fearful for his labour's issues, trims the tendrils we
shall note.
Now with hoe, and now with shovel, earthing now,
now pruning, binding,
All the gods he sends up prayers to, to the sun-god,
chief of all.

Bacchus, listless dreamer, little recks he of his faithful vassal.
He in leafy cave reclineth, toying with the youngest Faun.
All that for the half-awakings of his fumy dreams he lacketh
Lies in leathern skins, and earthen crocks and pitchers stored already,
From the ancient days eternal, right and left his grotto cool.
But when all the gods combining, Helios still of all the chiefest,
Airing, moistening, warming, firing, have the plumpy berries filled,
Where the dresser worked in silence, straightway all is life and bustle,
Voices ring from every alley, ring along from stake to stake;
Baskets patter, pitchers clatter, butt and waggon groaning stagger
Onwards to the mighty wine-press, to the pressers' sturdy tread;
And the sacred fulness of the purely nurtured juicy berries
Is profanely crushed; it mingles, foaming, seething, loathly squashed.
And now peals the cymbal, mingling with the beaker's brazen clangour,
For the mighty Dionysos hath his awful front unveiled;
Forth with cloven-footed Satyrs, and with reeling Bacchants comes he;
And, amid the din, incessant brays Silenus' long-eared beast!
Nought is spared! By cloven clutches trodden down is all decorum;
All the senses whirling madly, hideous din the ear confounds.

Tipsily they grope for goblets, heads and paunches both
o'er-laden;
Here and there some look dejected, still they swell
the tumult higher;
For, the new-made must to garner, out they drain the
wine-skin old! [*The curtain falls.*

PHORKYAS *in the proscenium rises to a gigantic height, descends from the cothurnus, lifts back the mask and veil, and discovers herself to be* MEPHISTOPHELES, *in order, so far as necessary, to comment on the piece by way of epilogue.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *A high mountainous region. Strong, jagged, rocky peaks.*

A cloud comes sweeping across the peaks, and settles upon a projecting plateau. It divides, and FAUST *advances.*

FAUST.

Down-gazing on the lonely depths beneath my feet,
I on this high-peaked ridge have purposely stepped
forth,
Leaving my cloudy car behind, that bore me well
Through days of sunshine over land and sea:
Slowly, but still compact, it draws from me away,
Trailing in volumed folds along towards the East.
The eye, in admiration lost, strains after it:
It parts, in wavelike motion swayed from change to
change,
Yet working into shape the while. What's this I see?
On sun-illumined cushions statelily reclined,
Of more than mortal size, a godlike woman's form!

Majestically fair, she floats before my eyes,
Like unto Juno's self, like Leda, Helena!
Ah, me! already gone! Broad, shapeless, high up-
piled,
Like far-off peaks of ice, it settles in the East,
And flashes what they mean, the days that fleet and
fade.
Still round my breast and brow there floats a film of
mist,
Cool, tender, and caressing, filling me with cheer:
Now softly up and up, and lingeringly, it ascends,
Then draws together. Mocks me a witching form,
In semblance of youth's first, long-lost, supremest bliss?
From my heart's depths its earliest treasures well;
For me love, light of wing, in its first dawn it types;
The look, felt to the core, the first, scarce understood,
That, cherished in the heart, all treasures else outshone.
Like beauty of the soul, the sweet form is sublimed;
Still it dissolveth not, into the sky it soars,
And with it bears away whate'er is best in me.

A seven-league boot comes clamping in, followed presently by another. MEPHISTOPHELES *steps out. The boot strides rapidly away.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We've come on at a rattling pace!
But what's your fancy now? What drags
You down on this disgusting place,
All gaping chasms and grewsome crags?
Though not where now it is, I know it well;
For 'twas in very sooth the floor of hell.

FAUST.

Your stock of silly legends never fails;
Again you'd mock me with these idle tales?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*gravely*).

When God the Lord (why, all too well I know)
Hurled us from out the sky to depths profound,
Where fires eterne shot from their central glow
Great sheets of flame that circled round and round,
We found ourselves, 'neath that too copious light,
Together jammed in most unpleasant plight.
The devils fell a-coughing, all of them,
Up hill, down dale, they spat and voided phlegm:
With acids and with sulphurous stench inflated —
That was a gas! — hell grew so much dilated
That very soon the earth's crust, flat at first,
Thick though it was, with a great crash upburst!
So things are all reversed; and this is how,
What bottom was erewhile is summit now.
The good sound doctrine, too, on this they base,
To give what's undermost the topmost place.
For we escaped from fiery bondage there,
To lord it bravely in the upper air, —
An open secret, warily concealed,
And only lately to mankind revealed.[1]

FAUST.

To me are mountain-masses nobly dumb;
I neither ask them whence, nor why, they come.
When Nature in herself herself had grounded,
Deftly the earthly ball she shaped and rounded;
With crested peak and rifted gorge she played,
Mountain with mountain, cliff with cliff arrayed;
The hills she moulded next, and sloped their steeps
Into the valleys down with gentle sweeps:
Then growth and verdure followed; spasms of fire
She needed not, to work out her desire.

[1] This seems to refer to the Scriptural allusion to Satan as "Prince of the Powers of the Air."

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, that's your view! To you 'tis clear as light;
But those who saw all know 'twas different quite.
Zounds! I was by, when with convulsive shock
The abyss burst up, with flames that roared and swirled,
When Moloch's hammer, smiting rock on rock,
Far in the air the splintered mountains hurled.
Strange massive boulders strew the country still;
The force that flung them there, who can explain?
As for philosophy, it never will:
There lies the rock, and there it must remain;
Thinking and theories are labour vain.
Your common folk, they only are cock-sure;
To try to shake their notions were mere waste,
Their wisdom long ago was quite mature;
A marvel 'tis, to Satan's credit placed.
On crutch of faith your pilgrim hobbles on
To Devil's Bridges, to the Devil's Stone.

FAUST.

What nature is, seen from the point of view
Of devils, is worth consideration too.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A fig for Nature! What is she to me?
My honour's touched! Myself was there to see!
The people we, grand issues to achieve;
Convulsion, outrage, madness! See, believe!
But now no more with sayings dark to tease you.
Did nothing in our upper surface please you?
You saw, stretched out in boundless space before ye,
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
Well, though you be so hard to satisfy,
Did nothing gladden either heart or eye?

FAUST.

Oh, yes! A grand idea lured me on.
Divine it!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That is quickly done.
I'd seek me out a city, which
Was in all urban horrors rich,
Close crookèd lanes, high gable-peaks,
Cramped market-place, kale, turnips, leeks,
Shambles, where blue-fly swarms and feasts
On carcasses of well-fed beasts:
There will you find at any time
Odours and bustle both sublime.
Vast squares I'd have, broad streets, that go
To make up an impressive show;
And lastly, where no gate confines,
Suburbs that spread in endless lines.
Of carriages I should have store,
To keep up an incessant roar,
And cheer me with the eternal flow
Of ant-swarms bustling to and fro.
And let me ride, or let me walk,
I still should be the pride, the talk
Of thousands, wheresoe'er I went.

FAUST.

Such things can bring me no content.
One's pleased that men should multiply,
And in their way be fairly fed,
Be even trained and taught; but by-and-by
We find, that thus are only rebels bred.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then, all for my delight, I'd rear a pile,
Where breezes freshliest blow, superb in style.

Hill, woodland, meadow, field, and glade,
Into a glorious garden should be made;
Smooth velvet lawns, enclosed in walls of green,
With shady groves, and winding walks between;
Tumbling cascades, from rock to rock that leap,
With water-jets of every varied sweep,
Majestic soaring some, with all around
Innumerable sprays, that hiss, and splash, and bound.
A dainty snug retreat I'd next prepare,
And lodge a bevy of fair women there,
Where through the illimitable hours I could
Enjoy the sweetest social solitude.
Women, I say; for, be it understood,
I never, never can my thoughts encumber
With the dear things but in the pural number.

FAUST.

Vulgar and vile! Sardanapalus!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good!
Oh, if one might divine your purpose! High,
Beyond a doubt, it is, and noble too!
When you were sailing to the moon so nigh,
Was it a craze for her that wafted you?

FAUST.

Not so! There still is scope for great
Achievements on this earthly sphere —
Things that shall make my memory dear.
Bold deeds alone my energy can sate.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So then 'tis fame you would attain?
That you come fresh from heroines is plain.

FAUST.

To rule, to own, that is my thought.
The deed is all, the fame is nought.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet poets will turn up, to blaze
Your glory forth to after-days,
And set by folly fools a-craze.

FAUST.

Where is the thing at which thou wilt not carp?
How shouldst thou know what man desires?
Thy odious nature, bitter, caustic, sharp,
How should it know what man requires?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, go your own way, since you must!
To me the full scope of your whims entrust!

FAUST.

On the sea's wide expanse I turned to look;
It heaved, as from within, with sullen roar,
Then it drew backward, and its billows shook,
To storm the broad reach of the level shore.
And, as a tyrant, overbearing mood
Jars the free soul, that writhes a wrong to see,
Excites the feelings, stirs the passionate blood
Into a ferment, so that angered me.
I deemed it chance, the scene more closely eyed;
A little while, then backward rolled the tide,
And from the goal so proudly reached withdrew;
But, come the hour, the sport begins anew.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*ad spectatores*).

To me this pretty tale no news can tell;
Some hundred thousand years I've known it well.

FAUST (*continues with passionate warmth*).

Onward it sweeps by courses numberless,
Barren itself, to squander barrenness;
Now swelling, growing, rolling on, it drowns
In desolation leagues of wasted downs;
There riots, wave on wave, with wanton force,
Then ebbs — and nothing's been achieved, of course.
I might despair, to see the aimless way
Such lawless elements exert their sway.
Yet no despair shall my resolve benumb;
Here I might struggle, here might overcome!
Might? Shall! Howe'er the waves run high, and fleet,
Gently they lap around each hill they meet;
Rage how they may and proudly domineer,
Still puny heights their crests against them rear,
And puny chasms to suck them down are strong.
Straight plan on plan into my mind 'gan throng;
Mine, mine the joy, of joys most precious, be,
Back from the shore to bear the imperious sea,
The bounds to narrow of the watery track,
And far into itself to thrust it back!
My plans I shall develop bit by bit:
You know my wish; be hold, and further it!

[*Drums and warlike music are heard behind the spectators, in the distance on the right.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, nothing easier! Hark, these drums afar!

FAUST.

How! War again? All wise men shrink from war.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Or war or peace, 'tis wise to lose no chance
Of reaping gain from every circumstance.
Who'd let a favourable opening slip?
Here's one! Well, Faustus, get it in thy grip!

FAUST.

Such riddling balderdash, I prithee, spare,
And what you drive at in a word declare!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

As I was coming here, I learned that lately
The worthy Emperor has been worried greatly.
You know the man. While we amused him, played
Into his hands the spurious wealth we made,
He held the whole world cheap; for he was young
When he succeeded to the throne, and so
To the false notion foolishly he clung,
That power and pleasure hand in hand might go,
And that 'twas fine, and the right thing to do,
To rule, and revel in enjoyment too.

FAUST.

A great mistake. He that is fit to rule,
In ruling must a high contentment find;
Of lofty aims his bosom should be full,
Yet what they are, by none must be divined.
What's whispered in one loyal ear and wise,
When it is done, takes all men by surprise.
So shall he wear right worthily the crown,
So stand supreme. Mere pleasure drags us down.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Not such is he! all times on pleasure bent!
Meanwhile the realm by anarchy was rent,

When high and low were each with each at feud,
When brother hunted brother, hacked and hewed,
Castle 'gainst castle warred, and town 'gainst town,
And guilds conspired to pull the nobles down.
Bishops against their flocks and Chapters rose;
And men, if they but met by chance, were foes.
In churches murder, at each city gate
Thieves lay for merchants, travellers, in wait.
Thus all men grew pugnacious in their bent;
For life was constant warfare. So things went.

FAUST.

Went! Limped along, fell down, got up, and then
Collapsed, and all aheap fell down again.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet this state of things none dared to blame,
For every man had some ambitious aim;
The very smallest his big project had,
But good men found things grow at last too mad.
Then rose the able in their might, and said:
"He that will give us peace shall be our head!
The Emperor cannot, will not! Let us choose
One, will new soul into the realm infuse,
Quicken the world into a nobler life,
Make all men feel secure, end rapine, strife,
And peace and justice through the land diffuse!"

FAUST.

A priestly twang in that!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Priests too were there.
For portly paunch they wanted copious fare;

They had a deeper stake than all the rest.
Rebellion grew, they the rebellion blessed!
And the poor Emperor, whom we made so gay,
To battle moves, perhaps his last, to-day.

FAUST.

It grieves me much — so good, so frank was he!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Pshaw! While there's life, there's hope! Come, let us see!
Let us but get him clear of this close valley!
He's safe for life, with one successful rally.
Which way the dice may tumble, who can tell?
Come luck, then vassals they will come as well!
[*They climb up the central mountain-peak, and look down upon the army drawn up in the valley. Drums and military music resound from below.*
Ha! The position's chosen well, I see.
If we strike in, he's sure of victory.

FAUST.

What now is in the wind? Deceit!
Magic illusion! Shows that cheat!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Warcraft, by which are battles won!
Think of the work you wish begun,
And to your grand idea cleave!
Save for the Emperor his throne and land;
Then, kneeling, from his hand in fief receive
A limitless expanse of ocean-strand.

FAUST.

You've compassed many things, 'tis true:
Well, well, go on, and win a battle too!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No; you're to win it! You must play
The general-in-chief to-day.

FAUST.

An honour truly, to command
Where I just nothing understand!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Leave to your Staff to see things straight,
And in the background calmly wait.
Long since I traced war's blunders to their source;
For triumph, on the elemental force
Of mountain and of man I rest:
Who into play can bring both these, is blest.

FAUST.

Who are the armed men there below?
Have you stirred up the Hill-folk?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No!
But, like good Master Peter Squence,[1]
The whole squad in its quintessence.

[1] A not very obvious allusion to the Peter Quince of "The Midsummer Night's Dream," who became the Peter Squenz of a German farce.

Enter THE THREE MIGHTY MEN.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here my fine fellows come! You see,
Of very different years they be —
Dress, armour different: you will not
Come badly off with such a lot. [*Ad spectatores.*
There's not a child but loves to see
Men in cuirass and knightly gorget dight;
And, as these knaves quite allegoric be,
They will for that give all the more delight.

BULLY (*young, lightly armed, clad in motley*).

If one stare at me, eye to eye,
I dash my fist straight off into his chops;
And any coward, if he fly,
I clutch him by the hair until he stops.

GRAB-QUICK (*manly, well-armed, richly clad*).

Such pranks are idle and unfitting,
An utter waste of time and tide;
Seize, pillage, plunder, unremitting,
And think of nothing else beside!

HOLDFAST (*stricken in years, strongly armed, without other garment*).

No mighty boon in that, I say!
Wealth, even though great, soon slips away
In life's swift currents strong and deep.
To seize is well, but better 'tis to keep:
Leave the gray carlot free to act,
And he will keep your gear intact.
[*They descend the mountain together.*

SCENE II. — *On the Spur of the Mountain.*

Drums and martial music heard from below. The EMPEROR'S *tent is pitched.* EMPEROR, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, *Attendants.*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

I still am satisfied, 'twas best
To draw back to the valley here
Our forces, when so hotly pressed:
'Twill win the day for us, I'm clear.

EMPEROR.

The event will show how that may be;
But this half flight, this yielding, troubles me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Look at our right flank! Ground, my liege, like this,
Not for the world would a true soldier miss;
The hills not steep, yet steeper than they show,
Odds in our favour, odds against the foe.
Whilst on the wavelike plain half hid we lie,
Their cavalry will never dare come nigh.

EMPEROR.

Nought's left me but to praise; stout heart,
Stout arm, can here play well their part.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Here where the central plain spreads many a rood,
You see the phalanx in true fighting mood.
Their lances, by the early sun-rays kissed,
Shimmer and sparkle through the morning mist.

How dark waves to and fro the massive square!
There thousand hearts beat high, to do or dare.
How strong we are, by this you may divine;
To them I trust to break the enemy's line.

EMPEROR.

Now for the first time this fair sight I see:
Worth twice its numbers such a host must be.

COMMANDER - IN - CHIEF.

Nothing to say of our left flank have I;
The stubborn rocks stout heroes occupy.
Yon broken cliff, that gleams with arms, secures
The entrance to the pass, and so ensures,
That here the enemy, surprised, will break
Their force compact, and bloody shipwreck make.

EMPEROR.

See, where they come, my traitor kin! Oh, how
They called me cousin, uncle, brother! Now
Still more and more presumptuous they grew,
Stripped me of power, of kingly reverence due,
Then, by their feuds, laid my whole kingdom waste,
And now in rebel league to crush me haste!
From side to side awhile the people sway,
Then in the torrent's whirl are swept away.

COMMANDER - IN - CHIEF.

A trusty spy, to gather news sent out,
Comes hurrying down the rocks; ill news, I doubt!

FIRST SPY.

By what guile and daring may,
And by many an artful track,

Here and there we forced our way,
Yet small comfort bring we back.
Loyalty to thee was sworn
By many in fine words; but all
Hung back, for they, they said, were worn
By public peril, civic brawl.

EMPEROR.

Oh, for themselves alone self-seekers care;
Duty, love, honour, gratitude are nought.
When things are doing well, who takes to thought
How, when the next house burns, his own may fare?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Here comes another, slow, with heavy feet:
He quakes in every limb, and seems dead beat.

SECOND SPY.

Glad were we, when we detected
Tumult raging, wild and weird;
All at once, and unexpected,
A new Emperor appeared.
Straight, submissive to his mandate,
O'er the plains the people sweep;
His false flag, as he had planned it,
They all follow — very sheep.

EMPEROR.

A rival Emperor as a boon I hail;
Emperor I never felt myself till now.
As a mere soldier did I don my mail;
For higher ends my casque now rings my brow.
At every *fête*, though brilliant it might be,
Complete throughout, yet danger lacked for me.

When, at your wish, to tilt at ring I went,
My heart beat high, I breathed the Tournament;
And had you not from war withheld me, fame
For deeds heroic would have crowned my name.
Mine was a soul, I felt, of dauntless mould,
When yonder sea of fire around me rolled;
It pressed upon me, threatening direful fate:
'Twas show, mere show, and yet the show was great.
Wild dreams I've had of victory and fame;
Now will I do what, left undone, was shame!

[*Heralds are despatched with a challenge to the rival Emperor. Enter* FAUST *in armour, his visor half closed.* THE THREE MIGHTY MEN *equipped and dressed as before.*

FAUST.

Behold us here, unchid withal, we hope;
For foresight, even when things are safe, there's scope.
The Mountain-folk, thou knowest, think and brood,
Deciphering the signs, in thoughtful mood,
That all through nature and the rocks are strewed.
Spirits, that long have left the plains, cling still
With fondness to lone peak and misty hill.
Through labyrinthine chasms their work is sped,
'Mid gases' reek, by fumes metallic bred;
They separate, test, combine, and never rest,
Of something new for evermore in quest.
With the light hand of spiritual power
They build up forms translucent hour by hour;
Then in the crystal, dumb although it be,
The upper world and all it does they see.

EMPEROR.

This I have heard, and I believe it true;
But what have we, friend, with all this to do?

FAUST.

The sorcerer of Sabine Norcia thou
Hast to thy service bound — he serves thee now.
How dread the fate hung over him, and dire!
The brushwood crackled, up shot tongues of fire;
Piled were the sapless billets round him, which
Were intermixed with brimstone-rods, and pitch:
Save him nor man, nor God, nor devil could, —
But thou didst burst these bonds of blazing wood!
This was at Rome. That service ne'er forgot,
To guard thy welfare is his constant thought.
Still from that hour, of self unheeding, he
Questions the stars, the deeps, and all for thee.
He charged us, straight to make thy business ours,
And stand by thee. Great are the mountains' powers —
Nature in them works so supremely free:
This stupid priests denounce as sorcery.

EMPEROR.

On days of festal, when my guests I greet,
Who, brimmed with pleasant thoughts, for pleasure meet,
It gladdens me to see them throng and press,
And, with the crowd, the hall grow less and less;
But welcomer than all the man must be
Who chivalrously comes to stand by me,
Here with the dawn, when perilous issues wait,
And o'er us darkly hang the scales of Fate.
But at this crisis grave, where now we stand,
Keep from thy ready sword thy stalwart hand,
Respect the hour, when mighty hosts draw near,
For or against me, to do battle here!
Self makes the man! Who covets crown or throne
Must prove his claim by prowess of his own.
As for that phantom who against us stands,
Dubs himself Emperor, ruler of our lands,

The army's Duke, my nobles' rising sun,
Let him to death by mine own hand be done!

FAUST.

Though it were glorious thus an end to make,
It were not well, my liege, thy life to stake.
With crest and plume is not the helmet dight?
It guards the head that nerves us for the fight.
Without the head what would the limbs avail?
If that grow torpid, these all faint and fail;
If that be hurt, all these are wounded too —
If healed, then vigour stirs in them anew:
Straight will the arm its stalwart right assert,
It lifts the shield to save the skull from hurt;
The sword as swiftly will its duty show,
Parry with vigour and return the blow;
The foot takes part in their success, and treads
Triumphant on the downstruck foemen's heads.

EMPEROR.

Such is my anger; him I thus would treat,
So make his head a footstool for my feet.

HERALDS (*returning*).

Little honour, little profit,
  Have we met with, where we went;
Rudely did they scorn and scoff it,
  That brave challenge which you sent.
"Your Emperor! Pshaw! We mock and flout him!
  Feeble echo in yon vale!
When we think or speak about him,
  'Pshaw!' we say, 'a bygone tale!'"

FAUST.

Things have fallen out as they would wish them who
Stand by your side unswervingly and true.

The foe draws near; thy troops on fire; do thou
Command the attack! No better time than now.

EMPEROR.

My claim to lead the host I here resign;
[*To the* COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.
And now that duty, good my lord, is thine.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Let the left wing set forward to the field!
The enemy's left, now coming up the slope,
Shall, ere they reach the top, be forced to yield;
With our young seasoned troops they cannot cope.

FAUST.

Let this blithe hero here, I pray your Grace,
Within your ranks, and quickly, take his place;
And, with your troops incorporated so,
The sterling stuff that he is made of show.
[*Points to the right.*

BULLY (*advancing*).

Who looks me in the face, he runs the hazard
Of being well scored over cheek and mazzard;
Who turns his back to me — well, he may risk it,
But down he'll topple, cleft from chine to brisket.
And if your men will only then
With sword and mace strike home like me,
Your foes amain will strew the plain,
Bathed in their blood as in a sea. [*Exit.*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Now let our central phalanx follow slow;
With force compact and wary meet the foe.
Already their right wing a check has met;
Their plans are by our tactics quite upset!

FAUST (*pointing to the middle one*).

Let him there also follow your commands!

HAVE QUICK (*advancing*).

With the army's pluck, heroic and fine,
Shall the thirst for plunder and pillage combine;
On this one object be all intent,
The rival Emperor's gorgeous tent!
Not long shall he flaunt it there in pride;
To the onslaught myself will the phalanx guide.

PILLAGE-FAST, SUTLER WOMAN (*fawning upon him*).

Although his wife I may not be,
He's the dearest of fancy men to me.
What a harvest awaits us there! Your drab
Is a very devil to gripe and grab.
Where she plunders and rifles, no pity has she;
Once win, and to do what you like you're free.

[*Exeunt.*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

As we foresaw, upon our left their right
Is hurled in force. Each man of ours will fight
To the last gasp to hold the foe in check,
That tries to storm the gorge's narrow neck.

FAUST (*beckons to the left*).

Pray you, sir, note yon fellow, too! What harm,
If strength consents itself with strength to arm?

HOLDFAST (*advancing*).

For the left wing dismiss all care!
'Twill hold its own, when I am there.
The old one about him has all his wits;
What I once grasp, no lightning splits. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*descending from above*).

Look now, how there, behind our left,
From every jagged rocky cleft,
Armed men press onward, closely packed,
The pass still further to contract!
With casque, cuirass, sword, shield, and spear,
A bulwark at our backs they rear,
Waiting the signal to strike home.
[*Aside to the knowing ones.*
You must not ask me whence they come.
I've not been slow, since I went out,
I've cleared the armouries round about.
They stood on foot or horseback there,
As if the lords of earth they were;
Knights, kaisers, kings they were of yore,
Now empty snail-shells, nothing more.
Many's the ghost himself with these has decked,
And to the life the Middle Ages played.
Whatever imps be now in them arrayed,
For this once they'll produce a rare effect. [*Aloud.*
Hark! What a temper they are in!
Mail clanks 'gainst mail with clattering din!
Torn banners, too, are fluttering there,
That longed again to breathe fresh air.
Here we have got an ancient people, who
Fain in this modern fray would mingle, too.
[*Tremendous blare of trumpets from above; perceptible wavering in the hostile army.*

FAUST.

Dark the horizon grows; meseems,
Breaks here and there in fitful gleams
A ruddy and portentous shine.
The spears, blood-boltered, flash and glare;
The rocks, the wood, the very air,
All heaven in sympathy combine.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The right flank stoutly holds its ground;
But, towering in their midst, I see
The giant Bully, dealing free
Those swashing strokes of his around.

EMPEROR.

At first I saw one arm up; now
A dozen rage there. Anyhow,
This can't be natural or right.

FAUST.

Hast thou not heard of mists, that round
The coasts of Sicily abound?
There, hovering clear in broad daylight,
Uplifted high in middle air,
Mirrored in exhalations rare,
A wondrous vision meets the gaze —
Towns oscillating to and fro,
Gardens now high, now sinking low,
Picture on picture breaking through the haze.

EMPEROR.

But yet, how strange! See, each spear-head,
As if with lightning, flashes red!
While moves the host, on every lance
I see a flamelet flit and dance:
To me it looks too spectral, quite.

FAUST.

Forgive me, these things glimpses show
Of spirits gone hence long ago,
The famous Twins revealed once more,
By whom of old all seamen swore, —
For our last stroke they nerve their might.

EMPEROR.

To whom, then, do we owe it, say,
That nature, in this wondrous way,
For us should spells so rare unite?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To whom, but to that mighty master
Who in his breast thy fate doth keep?
To see thee menaced with disaster,
Stirred feelings in him strong and deep.
So thou art saved, he gladly would
Meet death, to prove his gratitude.

EMPEROR

Round me that time with cheers and pomp they pressed.
Then I was something; this I wished to test,
So, without thinking, seized the chance, and there
Gave the white-bearded fellow some fresh air.
By this I robbed the clergy of a treat;
Thus was my fall in their good books complete.
Now, after all these years, am I to test
The outcome of a deed done half in jest?

FAUST.

Rich interest follows generous deed.
Now turn your gaze on high! He will
Some signal send, methinks. Give heed!
It will anon be visible.

EMPEROR.

An eagle hovers in the vaulted blue.
Him doth a griffin, fierce for fight, pursue.

FAUST.

Now mark! This augurs well, at least.
The griffin is a fabled beast;
What! He to wrangle with the eagle,
A bird so real and so regal?

EMPEROR.

See now, in circles wide they float,
Each coursing each — and now they clash
Together, and with gash on gash
Rend one another's breast and throat.

FAUST.

Look, look! The sorry griffin, how,
All rent and scarred, he staggers, drops
His lion tail! And see, he now
Is lost amid the pine-tree tops!

EMPEROR.

May this portend what is to be!
Lost in amaze, I wait to see.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*toward the right*).

See, see! the enemy give back,
Pressed by our still renewed attack,
And, feebly keeping up the fight,
They're falling back upon their right.
The left of their main body so
They into dire confusion throw.
Now on the right our phalanx brings
Its serried front, like lightning flings
Itself on the weak spot, and straight,
As ocean waves in stormy weather,
The forces, matched in bulk and weight,
In fray tumultuous clash together.

Nothing was ever better done;
For us the battle has been won.

EMPEROR (*on the left side, to* FAUST).

Look! Yonder something seems amiss!
What, what can be the cause of this?
No stones upon the foe are hailed,
And they the lower cliff have scaled;
None keep the heights, a blow to strike.
Look there! The foe, in serried mass,
Still pressing on and on, belike
Have gained possession of the pass;
Of ways unblest the issue plain!
These sleights of yours are all in vain. [*Pause.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My ravens here their flight are winging;
What can the message be they're bringing?
The other side, I fear, prevails.

EMPEROR.

What may these ill-starred birds presage?
Hither they bend their swarthy sails,
Straight from the rock-fight's fiery rage.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to the Ravens*).

Sit down by me, at either ear!
Whom you protect need never fear,
For your advice is sound and sage.

FAUST (*to the* EMPEROR).

Hast never heard of pigeons, who
Back to their nest and fledgelings flew
From regions strange to them and far?
That's the case here, though different.

The pigeon-post in peace is sent,
The raven-post's required for war.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

They tell me of a grievous pinch.
Look how they're pressing, inch by inch,
Around our heroes' rocky wall!
The nearest heights are stormed, alas!
And, if we were to lose the pass,
Our case would be most critical.

EMPEROR.

Betrayed! I am betrayed at last!
'Tis you have round me drawn the net!
Horror! to feel it holds me fast!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Courage! There's nothing lost as yet.
Patience unties the hardest knot;
Work's hottest, when the end's at hand.
I trusty messengers have got.
Command that I may take command!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (*who meanwhile has arrived*).

These men thou hast to counsel ta'en,
To me were, first and last, a pain.
The battle, now I cannot mend it,
'Twas they began, and they may end it.
My baton I to thee restore.

EMPEROR.

Not so! Retain it, till the Fates
Perchance may send us happier hours.

I shudder at this fellow's powers,
And his weird bird-confederates.
[*To* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Give you the baton? Surely no.
You're not, methinks, the proper man.
Command! Avert our overthrow!
And so betide, betide what can!
[*Exit into the tent with the* COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

His baton! Pooh! What silly fuss!
Small profit would it bring to us.
There was a kind of cross upon it.

FAUST.

What will you do?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Do? I have done it.
Hence, my black cousins, apt and fleet,
To the great mountain-lake! The Undines greet,
And for the semblance of a flood entreat!
By arts, hard to divine, of female scheming,
They from the thing that is can part the seeming,
And that it is the very thing will swear. [*Pause.*

FAUST.

Our ravens have with flattery rare
Cajoled the water-nymphs from their lair.
See, trickling rills begin to gush!
From many a dry bare rocky brow
The springs in full swift volume rush.
Yon victory is no victory now.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Strange greeting that! What follows next?
The boldest climber is perplexed.

FAUST.

Brook downward bounds to brook in headlong course,
From the ravines they rush with twofold force;
And now in one bright arch the torrent sweeps.
Wide o'er the rocks it spreads, a shining flat,
Flashes and foams to this side and to that,
And ledge by ledge into the valley leaps.
What boots the bravest heart a tide to stay
Must sweep before it everything away?
My very flesh to see such havoc creeps.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nothing see I of all these water-lies;
Illusions these only for human eyes:
This wondrous hap to me is sheer delight.
Huddled in heaps, they turn in headlong flight,
Fancying, the fools, they will be drowned,
And puff and blow on solid ground,
Their arms, like swimmers, striking out.
Now all's confusion, utter rout!
[*The Ravens have come back.*
To the great Master I'll speak well of you.
Now, would you prove yourselves true Masters too,
Hence to the smithy, belching fire,
Where the dwarf-folk, that never tire,
Strike sparks from metal and from stone;
Ask them for fire, while lightly chattering —
Fire brilliant, dazzling, sputtering, spattering,
Such as is but to fancy known.
Lightning, no doubt, far in the sky,
And stars swift shooting from on high,

May any summer night be seen ;
But lightning on the brushwood gleaming,
And stars that hiss on ground that's steaming,
Are not such common sights, I ween.
So, without fuss, you understand,
You first must beg, and then command.
[*The Ravens fly away. All happens as prescribed.*
Thick darkness settles on the foe!
Which way to turn, they do not know.
Meteors all round, and sudden light,
To dazzle and confound the sight!
Magnificent! But now we want
Some sound to terrify and daunt.

FAUST.

The empty arms, from ancient halls that came,
Find the fresh air breathe vigour through their frame.
They're rattling, banging, clattering up there —
A wonderful, discordant blare!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Quite right! They're not to be kept back!
Now rings out knightly whack on whack,
As in the famous good old days.
Gauntlet, cuirass, and cuisses too,
As Guelphs and Ghibellines, renew
Full tilt their never-ending frays.
Firm in transmitted rancour, they
A hate implacable display.
Now far and wide the tumult brays!
And so, at every devil's *fête*
Nought works so well as party hate,
Down to the last convulsive throe.
Wild sounds, that scatter fear and panic,

Mingled with piercing yells Satanic,
Ring down into the vale below.
[*War tumult in the Orchestra, passing at last into cheerful military music.*

SCENE III. — *The Rival Emperor's Tent.*

Throne, Rich Surroundings. HAVE QUICK — PILLAGE-FAST.

PILLAGE-FAST.

We're first upon the field, you see.

HAVE QUICK.

No raven flies so fast as we.

PILLAGE-FAST.

Oh, look, what heaps of treasure there!
Where to begin? To finish where?

HAVE QUICK.

So crammed the place with plunder stands,
I know not where to lay my hands.

PILLAGE-FAST.

That carpet suits me to a T;
My bed is often too hard for me.

HAVE QUICK.

A Morgenstern of steel! Just such
As I for years have longed for much!

PILLAGE - FAST.

That scarlet cloak with golden seams,
One like it has often crossed my dreams!

HAVE QUICK (*taking the weapon*).

With this one makes short work. A blow,
The fellow's dead, and on we go!
You've packed up such a lot, and yet
Not managed the right sort to get.
Leave all that rubbish where it lay;
Take one of these small chests away!
The army's niggard pay they hold;
Its belly's stuffed with solid gold.

PILLAGE - FAST.

'Tis mortal heavy! More than I
Am fit to lift or carry.

HAVE QUICK.

Try!
Quick, stoop! Duck down, and let me pack
The box upon your sturdy back.

PILLAGE - FAST.

Alack, alack! I'm done for! Whew!
It fairly breaks my back in two.
[*The chest falls and breaks open.*

HAVE QUICK.

There lies the red gold, all aheap;
Quick, quick, and up the shiners sweep!

PILLAGE-FAST (*crouches down*).

Into my lap with them! With this
We sha'n't do very much amiss.

HAVE QUICK.

There! That's enough! Off with you! Pack!
[*She rises.*
Your apron has a hole. Alack!
Whether you stand or move, no matter,
The treasure recklessly you scatter.

HALBERDIERS (*of the true* EMPEROR *enter*).

This spot is sacred! What are you about?
Rifling the Emperor's treasure-trove, I doubt?

HAVE QUICK.

Limb, life we risked, and cheaply for his sake,
And of the booty now our share we take.
'Tis common usage, friend, the victor's due;
And as for us, why, we are soldiers too.

HALBERDIERS.

That makes no part of our belief;
A soldier, quotha, and a thief!
The man who serves our Emperor must
Be one whose honesty we trust.

HAVE QUICK.

That honesty right well we know;
You name it "Contribution," though.
You're all on the same footing here;
The password of your trade is "Give!"
[*To* PILLAGE-FAST.
Start off with what you've sacked! 'Tis clear,
We're anything but welcome here. [*Exeunt.*

FIRST HALBERDIER.

The saucy knave! Why broke you not
His pate across upon the spot?

SECOND HALBERDIER.

Can't tell! I felt unnerved. They were
So phantom-like and weird a pair.

THIRD HALBERDIER.

Something went wrong about my sight;
'Twas dazzled, I saw nothing right.

FOURTH HALBERDIER.

What it all means, I fathom not.
All through the day it was so hot,
Oppressive, close, such sultry smother,
One kept his feet, down dropped another;
We groped and laid about us so,
A foeman fell at every blow;
Before our eyes there waved a mist,
Within our ears it buzzed and hissed:
So things went on, and here are we,
But know not how things came to be.

Enter THE EMPEROR *with four* PRINCES. THE HALBERDIERS *retire.*

EMPEROR.

Well, leave him to his fate! The day is ours. In
panic rout
The beaten foe across the plains is scattered all about.
Here stands the empty throne, here finds the traitor's
treasure place,
And, hung around with tapestries, contracts the narrow
space.

We, rich in honour, shielded by our own true guards the while,
Await our people's envoys here in high imperial style.
From every side come tidings in, glad tidings, hour by hour,
That peace is to a realm restored, that gladly owns our power.
If, in the stand we made, some sleights of jugglery were wrought,
Yet, when all's said, 'twas we alone, and only we who fought.
Mere accidents for those who fight will sometimes work to good —
Here falls from heaven a meteor-stone, there rains a shower of blood.
Sounds of a wild and wondrous kind boom from the caverns near,
That make our hearts beat high, and fill the foeman's hearts with fear.
A mark for lasting jeer and scorn, the vanquished prone is laid;
By the exulting victor praise to the favouring God is paid.
No need to give command, for all unite with one accord
From thousand throats to cry, "We give Thee thanks and praise, O Lord!"
Yet — best and highest praise of all! — I turn on mine own breast, —
Which rarely I have done before, — mine eyes in pious quest.
A young gay-hearted prince may waste the happy days are his;
The rolling years teach how momentous every moment is.
Therefore no more will I delay, but link myself with you,

To stand for home, and court, and realm, ye worthy
Four and true. [*To the first Prince.*
'Twas you, O Prince, who skilfully and well disposed our host,
Who in the crisis of the day showed nerve and skill the most;
Now what the time demands work thou, peace being thus restored,
Arch-Marshal henceforth be thy name! To thee I give the sword.

ARCH-MARSHAL.

Thy faithful troops, till now engaged within the realm alone,
When they have made thy frontiers safe, and safe with it thy throne,
Then be it ours, on holidays, when thronging guests are poured
Through thy ancestral banquet-hall, to dress thy festive board.
Before thee then the sword I'll bear, I'll bear it by thy side,
Of sovereign Majesty at once the symbol, guard, and guide!

EMPEROR (*to the second Prince*).

Let him who doth a valiant heart with courtesy unite —
Such thou! — be my Arch-Chamberlain! The duties are not light.
Within our royal household be the head supreme of all;
Ill service do I get from them, so prone are they to brawl.
Henceforth, by thy example taught, may they be more inclined
To be to me, the Court, and all, obliging, courteous, kind!

ARCH - CHAMBERLAIN.

The Master's lofty purposes to further bringeth grace;
To bring help to the good, and not to injure even the base,
To be without dissembling frank, and calm without deceit!
If thou, sir, see me through and through, my joy is all complete.
May fancy on that feast to come be peradventure bent,
The golden basin at the board to thee I shall present,
Thy rings for thee I'll hold, that so thy hands refreshed may be,
As my heart will at that glad time rejoice in smiles from thee.

EMPEROR.

My mood, in sooth, is now too grave on festive thoughts to rest.
And yet not so! To start afresh with cheerfulness is best. [*To the third Prince.*
You as Arch-Steward I select. Henceforward under you
Shall be my forests and their game, my farm, my poultry, too!
Let me select the dishes that I love, and you prepare
These dishes, as each month shall bring its own, with heedful care.

ARCH - STEWARD.

Gladly will I all meats forego, my appetite might whet,
Until some dish, will glad thy heart, before thee shall be set.
The kitchen staff shall join with me to bring what's distant here,
And to accelerate, besides, the seasons of the year.

Thee charms not far nor early cheer, wherewith thy table's graced;
Plain food and nourishing is more congenial to thy taste.

EMPEROR (*to the fourth Prince*).

Since revelry and feast alone perforce engage us now,
Young hero, beautiful as brave, my cupbearer be thou!
As Arch-Cupbearer, let henceforth this special care be thine,
To see our cellars richly stored with the very choicest wine.
But be thou temperate thyself, and never lose thy head,
By the exhilarating lures of social mirth misled.

ARCH-CUPBEARER.

Even striplings, O my liege, if trust in them be only shown,
Are found, ere one may look about, to man's full vigour grown:
So I at that high feast as well shall duly take my place;
The Imperial sideboard I shall deck with truly royal grace,
With goblets silvern, golden, too, magnificent to see;
But chief I'll choose a beaker, far excelling all, for thee —
A clear Venetian glass, wherein a joy delicious waits,
Gives fuller flavour to the wine, but ne'er inebriates.
Too great reliance some will place on such a wondrous prize;
But in thy moderation, Sire, a truer safeguard lies.

EMPEROR.

What in this grave and solemn hour I have on you conferred,
You have with confidence received, relying on my word.

The Emperor's word is mighty, and assures all gifts, of course,
Yet his Sign-Manual's needed too, his mandates to enforce.
This they shall have; and see, where comes, most opportunely too,
The very man to give to them the formal sanction due.

Enter THE ARCHBISHOP — LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

EMPEROR.

When once an arch's curvature is to the keystone braced,
Then is it for all future time beyond all danger placed.
Thou seest these four Princes here! To these we have explained,
How in the days to come our house and Court shall be maintained.
But now, ye Five, on you and your sagacity and power,
What will promote the whole realm's weal is rested from this hour.
In landed wealth 'tis meet that you all others shall outshine,
Therefore to you these broad domains I here at once assign,
The forfeit heritage of that revolted traitor crew.
Thus many a region fair I give — for stanch ye were and true —
Together with the fullest right, whene'er you see a chance,
By raid, or purchase, or exchange, their limits to enhance,
And power to exercise unchecked whatever rights to you,
As owners of the soil, by use and wont are rightly due.

The judgments you as judges give shall final be: so high
Your power shall stand, that no appeal against them e'er shall lie.
Then impost dues, and tithe and toll, safe-conduct, duties, fees,
Shall all be yours, and mining, salt, and coinage royalties.
For that my gratitude may thus effectively be shown,
I've raised you to a rank is only second to my own.

ARCHBISHOP.

Let me in name of all to thee our deepest thanks express:
Making us safe and strong, thyself shall strengthened be no less.

EMPEROR.

Even higher dignities, and more, I to you Five will give.
I live but for my realm, and I for that delight to live;
Yet does the great ancestral claim withdraw my gaze from hours
Of stir and striving to the doom that still before us lours.
I too, in God's good hour, must part from all that I hold dear:
Then be it yours to choose the man who shall succeed me here;
On holy altar raise him high, the crown upon his brow,
And thus bring to a peaceful close what was all storm but now.

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

Pride in our hearts, but bowed in deep humility we stand,
Thy vassals, princes though we be, the foremost in the land.

While runs the blood within our veins in copious current, still
The body we, prompt to obey thy every wish and will.

EMPEROR.

And now to end! Let all the powers that we to-day concede,
Be ratified for all future time by manual-sign and deed.
You o'er your property shall hold dominion full and free,
On this condition, that it ne'er partitioned out shall be:
Moreover, if you add to what you now from us receive,
You to your eldest sons the whole shall in like manner leave.

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

To parchment presently will I transfer this statute, fraught
With weal to us and to the realm, right happy in the thought.
To have it written fair and sealed, the Chancery shall see;
And ratified it then, my liege, by thy great hand shall be.

EMPEROR.

And so I now dismiss you all, that you conjointly may
Deliberate on the events of this momentous day.

[*The Temporal Princes retire. The* ARCHBISHOP *remains, and speaks in a pathetic tone.*

ARCHBISHOP.

The Chancellor has retired, my liege, the Bishop stays behind,
To crave thine ear, impelled by grave anxiety of mind.
His father-heart is sad for thee, and full of sore dismay.

EMPEROR.

Dismay? Speak out! What troubles you on this so joyous day?

ARCHBISHOP.

With deep and bitter anguish, sir, at such a time I find
Thy hallowed head in compact close with Satanas combined!
True, thou'rt secured upon thy throne, — so seems it, so I hope, —
But heedless, ah! of God the Lord, and our Holy Sire the Pope,
Who, when he hears of this, will straight pronounce his awful doom,
And with his lightnings will thy realm, thy sinful realm, consume.
For he has not forgotten how, the day that thou wert crowned,
A great and solemn time, thou hadst the Sorcerer unbound,
When from thy diadem the first bright beam of grace was shed,
A scandal to all Christendom, on that accursèd head.
But beat thy breast, and render up — 'tis for thy spirit's health —
To Holy Church some little slice of thy ill-gotten wealth:
The broad expanse of hills, we'll say, where stood thy tent, and where
In thy defence were banded evil Spirits of the Air,
Where to the Prince of Lies thou didst lend willing ears of late, —
That spot do thou to pious use contritely dedicate,
With mountain and dense forest too, as far as they extend,
And hilly slopes, with verdure clad, that in broad meadows end;

Pellucid lakes, well stocked with fish, brooks numberless withal,
That, hurrying down with snake-like bends, into the valleys brawl;
Then the broad vale itself, with meads, enclosures, open plains:
A penitence, that such utterance finds, sure grace and pardon gains.

EMPEROR.

This heavy sin of mine so fills my heart and soul with awe,
I leave it to yourself, my lord, the boundaries to draw.

ARCHBISHOP.

First be the unhallowed spot, whose sins for vengeance cry aloud,
With all due speed unto the Lord Most High for ever vowed.
In spirit I can see the walls rise high and ever higher;
The first beams of the morning sun illuminate the choir;
The structure takes the Cross's form, complete in all its parts,
Longer and higher grows the nave, and glads believers' hearts;
Now through the stately portal wide they stream, aflame with zeal,
And far o'er hill and dale resounds the bells' first ringing peal;
They clash and clang from lofty towers that high aspire to heaven,
And penitents throng in, and feel new life to them is given.

On the great Consecration Day — that day soon may we see! —
When all are met, thy presence will the chief adornment be.

EMPEROR.

A work so noble well may serve to show the pious thought,
To praise the Lord, and expiate the sin that I have wrought.
Enough! Already I can feel my spirit soaring higher.

ARCHBISHOP.

This under hand and seal I now as Chancellor require.

EMPEROR.

A formal document, that secures the Church in fullest right,
Lay thou before me, and I will subscribe it with delight.

ARCHBISHOP (*has taken leave, but turns back, as he is going out*).

Then to the work as it proceeds, 'tis meet thou dedicate
Tithes, taxes, customs, tribute, toll, and every due and rate,
For ever. It requires so much the fabric to maintain,
And the staff to keep the service up will cost vast sums, 'tis plain.
To push the building quickly, on so desolate a spot,
Some gold, of that which thou hast ta'en, thou wilt to us allot.
We shall require, besides — and this I needs must call to mind —
Much foreign timber, lime, and slates, and things of the like kind.

The people, from the pulpit taught, will do the carriage; yes!
All those who for her service work, the Church doth ever bless. [*Exit.*

EMPEROR.

Oh, heavy is the sin and great that such dire penance craves!
They've brought me to a pretty pass, these necromancing knaves!

ARCHBISHOP (*returning again, and making a deep obeisance*).

Pardon, my liege, the realm's seashore to that vile worthless man
Has been made over, but he will be blasted by the Ban,
Unless there, too, our Holy Church in deep contrition thou
With tithes and taxes, rents and dues, and revenues endow.

EMPEROR (*losing his temper*).

There is no land there yet; the sea sweeps o'er it far and wide.

ARCHBISHOP.

His time comes who's content to wait, with right upon his side.
We still shall have thy royal word — no power may that gainsay. [*Exit.*

EMPEROR (*alone*).

So may I just as well at once my kingdom sign away!

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Open country.*

WANDERER.

There they are! How well I mind them,
The dark lindens old and strong.
And I am again to find them
After years of travel long!
'Tis the old spot, unforsaken;
Still the sheltering cot is there,
As when billows tempest-shaken
Flung me on these sandhills bare.
My kind hosts, I fain would greet them,
Brave good helpful souls, again:
But I scarce may hope to meet them;
They were aged even then.
Pious, ah, how pious were ye!
Shall I knock, or call? What ho!
Hail, if kindly still as e'er, ye
Of good deeds the blessing know!

BAUCIS (*very old*).

Hush, hush, stranger, hush! No breaking
On my husband's spell of rest!
To give to his few hours of waking
Vigour, good long sleep is best.

WANDERER.

Mother, thou still here, and he, too,
To receive the thanks I owe
For the young man's life, by ye two
Saved now many years ago?

Art thou Baucis, who so tended,
Nursed me back to life again?
[*The husband comes out of the cottage.*
Thou he (*turning to* PHILEMON), who with courage splendid
Snatched my treasure from the main?
Your fire, blazing fast and faster,
Your bell with its silver sound,
They from that so dire disaster
Me a safe deliverance found.
Let me on a little way there,
View the boundless ocean first;
Let me kneel, and let me pray there!
Seems my heart as it would burst!
[*He walks away upon the dunes.*

PHILEMON (*to* BAUCIS).

Quick, wife! Spread the table under
The green shadow of our trees.
Let him go! He'll start in wonder.
Not believing what he sees!
[*Following the wanderer. Standing beside him.*
Where the billows, wildly booming,
Savagely maltreated you;
Now 'tis like a garden, blooming
Fair as eye could wish to view.
Old in years as I was growing,
Help I could not, as of yore;
And, while my own strength was going,
Farther off, too, went the shore.
Great folks' serfs, with dauntless daring,
Trenches dug and bulwarks spread,
Ocean's ancient rights impairing,
To be masters in its stead.
See, green fields on fields, and nigh them
Woodland, garden, mead, and town!

But now come, our viands, try them,
For the sun will soon be down.
Far out there, see, vessels beating
Up to port for night repair,
Birdlike to their nest retreating,
For there's now a harbour there.
Only on the sky-line yonder
May a streak of sea be seen;
All ways, far as eye can wander,
Lies thick-peopled land between.

SCENE II. — *In the Little Garden.*

The three at table.

BAUCIS (*to the stranger*).

Silent still? And not a grain here
Yet has crossed your lips?

PHILEMON.

Od's life!
Of our marvels more he'd fain hear:
You like talking; tell him, wife.

BAUCIS.

Marvels! Ay! If ever any;
Even yet they make me grew;
For in manner quite uncanny
The whole thing was carried through.

PHILEMON.

Can the Emperor be to blame? It
Was himself gave up the shore.
Did a herald not proclaim it,
Trumpeting, as he passed our door?

On our downs hard by their footing
First was planted. There were seen
Bothies, tents. But soon, upshooting,
Rose a palace 'midst the green.

BAUCIS.

Vain all day their hacking, tearing,
Pick and shovel, stroke on stroke!
Where night-long great fires were flaring,
Stood a bank when morning broke.
Human victims surely bled there —
Through the dark their cries were borne;
Flashing fires to seaward sped there,
'Twas a great canal by morn.
He is godless, he has set his
Heart upon our cot, our wood.
A fine neighbour he, who'll get his
Will, and will not be withstood!

PHILEMON.

Still he made a fairish tender, —
A snug farm on his new land!

BAUCIS.

Never your own knoll surrender!
Trust not what was sea and sand.

PHILEMON.

To the chapel, on the dying
Rays of sunset there to gaze!
Let us ring, kneel, pray, relying
On the God of ancient days!

SCENE III. — *Palace.*

Spacious ornamental garden — wide, straight canal.

FAUST (*in extreme old age, walking and meditating*).

LYNCEUS, THE WARDER (*through his speaking-trumpet*).

Sinks the sun, the ships are nearing
Port before the night shall fall,
And a stately bark is steering
Hither up the great canal.
Her gay pennons brightly flutter;
On her stout masts swell the sails;
Blessings on thee seamen mutter;
Thee The Blest high fortune hails.
[*The chapel bell on the dunes rings.*

FAUST.

Accursèd bell! Its tinkle wounds me,
Like caitiff shot from hand unkind.
Unbounded is my realm before me,
Vexation stings me from behind.
It minds me, by its hateful pealing,
My happiness is mixed with pine:
The clump of limes, the dusky shieling,
The crumbling chapel are not mine.
If there I wished an hour of leisure,
Shades not my own would blight the day,
They would be thorns to dash my pleasure.
Oh, would that I were far away!

WARDER (*as above*).

How blithely does the galley gay
Before the fresh breeze cleave its way!

How on it bears a towering hoard
Of sacks, chests, coffers, piled aboard!
[*A splendid galley, richly and showily laden with products of foreign countries.*

MEPHISTOPHELES. THE THREE MIGHTY COMPANIONS.

CHORUS.

Back already, land we here!
All hail, master, patron dear!
[*They disembark; the goods are brought ashore.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well have we shown what we could do —
Content, if we are praised by you:
With but two ships we went away,
Now twenty have in port to-day.
By the rich cargo we have brought,
Behold, what great things we have wrought!
Free ocean sets the spirit free;
We make our own whate'er we see;
What's needed there's a hasty grip —
One grabs a fish, one grabs a ship.
Once we have three of these in store,
We never rest till we have four;
Then is the fifth in evil plight.
Who has the power, he has the right;
The WHAT'S the question, not the HOW.
At seaman's craft I am not clever:
Trade, commerce, piracy, are now
A Trinity, to be sundered never.

THE THREE LUSTY COMPANIONS.

No thank, or welcome! no welcome, or thank!
As if the things we have brought him stank!

Quite out of humour he looks, and grim;
This royal booty delights not him.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Expect no further reward; for you
Already have taken what was your due.

THE COMPANIONS.

You're only jesting? Fair is fair!
We all insist on an equal share.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

First range in order, through hall and hall,
The things are richest, one and all.
The dazzling show when he comes to see,
And finds how precious and rare they be,
Be sure, he'll do the handsome thing,
And give the fleet high junketing.
To-morrow the Bona Robas[1] come;
They shall be well cared for, all and some.
[*The cargo is carried away.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

With gloomy looks and brow austere
You of your high good fortune hear.
Success has on your wisdom smiled —
Ocean and shore are reconciled;
And from the shore the ocean sweeps
Your ships, and speeds them o'er its deeps.
Then speak, and from your palace here

[1] By "Die bunten Vögel" of the original, "birds of gay plumage," Goethe seems to mean the Doll Tearsheets of the neighbouring port.

Your arm clasps either hemisphere.
From this spot dated all the good —
'Twas here the first log-cabin stood:
A tiny trench was cut — no more —
Where plashes now the busy oar.
Your people's toil, your master-brain,
Have wrung this prize from land and main.
From here too —

FAUST.

That accursèd here!
'Tis this which makes my heart so sick.
I needs must whisper in your ear,
It gnaws me, stings me to the quick;
The thought I can nor bear nor crush,
Yet must at the avowal blush —
The old folks must turn out up there.
I want that lime-grove for a site;
These few trees, not my own, they quite
The charm of all I own impair.
There, far and wide around to gaze,
From bough to bough I'd scaffolds raise,
Whence should be opened to the view
All that I've done, broad vistas through,
And at a glance might be surveyed
The master-work man's soul has made,
Winning, by well-concerted plan,
A wide and fertile home for man.
So we are kept upon the rack —
'Midst riches feeling what we lack.
The tinkling bell, the limes' perfume,
Haunt me like crypt's or church's gloom.
The will, with which no mortal copes,
Is broken on these sandy slopes:
How of the thought to be beguiled!
There goes the bell, and I am wild!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of course, a great chagrin like this
Is gall and wormwood in your bliss.
Who but will own, this clink-clank must
Fill every fine ear with disgust;
And this curst ding-dong-bell, that shrouds
The cheerful evening sky with clouds,
Mingles with each event and mood
Down to the grave from babyhood,
Till life 'twixt ding and dong doth seem
The chaos of a faded dream.

FAUST.

Marred at its height is our success,
By merely wilful stubbornness,
So that in angry, deep disgust,
One tires at last of being just.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why fret? Have you this many a year
Not worked at colonising here?

FAUST.

Go then — away the old folks clear!
The pretty little farm you know
I picked out for them long ago.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We'll bear them off, and plant them there
Quite snug, or ever they're aware:
A pretty home, at any rate,
For usage rough will compensate.

[*Whistles shrilly; enter* THE THREE.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come on! your lord's behests complete,
And he'll to-morrow feast the fleet.

THE THREE.

He gave us scurvy welcome. Least
He owes us is a rattling feast.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*ad spectatores*).

Here, too, befalls what long ago befell;
For we've a Naboth's vineyard here as well.

DEEP NIGHT.

LYNCEUS (*sings on the watch-tower*).

For my keen vision noted,
Set to watch day and night,
To my tower devoted,
The world's my delight.
I scan the far forces,
I mark what is near,
Moon, stars in their courses,
The woodlands, the deer.
Thus a charm never-failing
I see all around,
And I am glad, hailing
The joy I have found.
O happy eyes, never
Unblest; for whate'er
Ye have looked on, wherever
It met ye, was fair. [*Pause.*

Not for my enjoyment merely
Am I stationed here so high;

From the dark what horror drearly
Breaks with menace on mine eye?
Fire-flakes shooting up, I scan them
Through the lindens' twofold night;
Fiercelier, as the wind-gusts fan them,
Rage the flames, and flash more bright.
Ah, the cot's on fire, unheeded,
Damp it was and moss-o'ergrown;
Sorely swiftest help is needed,
Help or succour there is none.
Ah, the good old man and mother!
Erst so careful they of fire,
They will perish in the smother —
Perish, oh, disaster dire!
All aglow within the lonely
Dark hut! Flames around it swell!
Oh, if these good souls might only
'Scape from out yon blazing hell!
Tongues of flame shoot up and flicker
'Twixt the leaves and branches green,
Withered boughs, consuming quicker,
Blaze awhile, then fall between.
Eyes, shall you see this? Ah, me!
Must I so far-sighted be?
Crushed by falling branches, crashes
Down the chapel to the ground;
The steeple now with forkèd flashes,
Coiling serpent-like, is crowned.
Down to their roots the tree-trunks blighted
Glow red in the fiery blast! [*Long pause.* *Song.*
What erewhile the eye delighted
Hence hath with the ages passed.

FAUST (*on the balcony, facing the dunes*).

Aloft there what a cry of wailing!
Words and moans are now too late;

The warder grieves: though unavailing,
My grief for this rash act is great.
But though the linden-grove, ablaze there,
Lie all in ruin charred and black,
A stately tower I'll quickly raise there,
To look from far as eye can track.
There, too, I see the new home folding
Within its walls the aged pair,
Who, gratefully my care beholding,
Shall end their days in comfort there.

MEPHISTOPHELES *and* THE THREE *below.*

We've come as fast as we could hie!
Your pardon! Things have gone awry.
We knocked and kicked, and kicked and knocked,
And still the door they kept it locked.
We knocked and knocked, we shook it well,
And then the rotten fabric fell.
We shouted, threatened, loud and clear,
But could not make the people hear.
And, as folks do in such a mood,
Hear us they neither did nor would;
But we, remembering what you said,
Soon turned the old souls out of bed.
They made the business easy quite, —
Down dead they fell, of simple fright.
A stranger whom they had aboard,
And who showed fight, was quickly floored.
In the short scrimmage — it fell out —
From cinders, that got strewn about,
The thatch caught fire. 'Tis blazing free,
A funeral-pyre for all the three.

FAUST.

No ear to my commands you lent!
Not plunder, but exchange, I meant.

This brutal outrage, mad and worse,
I curse it! Hence! and 'mong you share my curse!

CHORUS.

The ancient saw, we have it here:
To might give still a ready ear!
If bold, and reckless what befall,
Risk house and home, yourself — and all!
[*Exeunt.*

FAUST.

The stars conceal their sheen and glow,
The fire begins to smoulder low;
A chilly breeze upon its wings
To me the smoke and smother brings.
Rash hest, too recklessly obeyed!
What there comes hovering like some spectral shade?
[*Draws back.*

Enter FOUR GRAY WOMEN.

FIRST.

My name, it is WANT.

SECOND.

And mine, it is BLAME.

THIRD.

Mine, CARE!

FOURTH.

NECESSITY, that is my name.

THREE (*speaking together*).

The door it is bolted, we cannot go in;
A rich man dwells there, and we may not within.

WANT.

I fade to a shade there.

BLAME.

There I cease to be.

NECESSITY.

There the eye is too dainty to look upon me.

CARE.

Ye sisters, ye neither can enter, nor dare;
But the keyhole's a portal sufficient for Care.

[CARE *disappears.*

WANT.

Gray sisters, away! Here no more may we bide.

BLAME.

Where you go, there I go, and stick by your side.

NECESSITY.

On your heels I will follow, Necessity saith.

THE THREE.

The clouds they roll up, disappears star on star.
Behind there, behind! From afar, from afar!
He is coming, our brother is coming — Death!

FAUST (*within the palace*).

I saw four come, and only three go hence.
Some words I heard, but could not catch the sense.
Necessity, said one, with muttered breath,
And then there came a rhyme ill-omened — DEATH:
A dull dead sound, of ghostly note, methought.
Not yet have I my way to freedom fought!

Could I sweep magic from my path, forego
The spells of sorcery one and all, and grow
A man unwarped by creed or care or wile,
Then, then, to be a man were worth the while!
Such was I once, ere I my studies fed
With the dark lore of arts inhibited —
Ere my chagrin in impious frenzy burst,
And mine own self and all the world I curst.
So now the very air do phantasms fill,
That how to 'scape them passes mortal skill.
Yea, if for us one day hath cheering gleams,
Night wilders us with spirit-haunted dreams.
The fresh green fields have made our pulses dance;
Then croaks a bird: what does it croak? — Mischance!
Clasped soon and late in Superstition's arms,
It will be heard, it haunts us, it alarms:
And so we stand alone, scared, trembling, dumb.
I heard the door creak; in has no one come.
[*Shaken with apprehension.*
Is some one here?

CARE.

So asked, I say, There is!

FAUST.

Who, then, art thou?

CARE.

Enough that here I be!

FAUST.

Go, get thee hence!

CARE.

My proper place is this.

FAUST (*at first incensed, then softening down*).

Take heed, Faust. Use no spell of wizardrie!

CARE.

Though the ear may hear me not,
Fear is in the heart begot.
In for ever changing guise
Cruel power I exercise;
On the ocean, on the shore,
Sad companion evermore;
Always found, and sought for never,
Cursed, cajoled, and flattered ever!
Care hast thou, then, never known?

FAUST.

I've galloped merely through the world, I own.
Each pleasure by the hair I'd seize,
Cast off whatever failed to please,
What 'scaped me let unheeded go.
First craving, then achieving, then
Longing for something new again;
And stoutly on through life went storming so,
Grandly at first, and foremost in the race,
But sagely now, and at a sober pace.
Of man and earth I know enough; what lies
Beyond is barricaded 'gainst our eyes.
Fool, who with blinking gaze out yonder peers,
And dreams of kindred souls in upper spheres!
Let him stand firm, and look around him here.
Not dumb this world to him that bears a brain:
Why through eternity should he career?
What things he knows will in his grasp remain.
So let him roam on through his earthly day;
Though spirits gibber, calmly hold his way;
And longing still, and still unsatisfied,
Accept his fate, let joy or grief betide.

CARE.

Him I in my gripe have got
All the world availeth not.
Gloom upon him ever lies.
Suns set not for him, nor rise.
Sound in outward sense, and hale,
Darknesses within prevail.
Riches fineless may be his,
Yet he ne'er their master is.
Whim to him are good and ill;
He 'mid plenty hungers still.
Be it joy or be it sorrow,
Off he puts it till to-morrow,
All intent on what's to be,
Evermore unready he.

FAUST.

Have done! This is for thee no place.
Nor me to listen to such trash befits.
Away! That litany so vile, so base,
Might rob the very sagest of his wits.

CARE.

Shall he go? Or shall he come?
Doubt doth his resolve benumb;
On a beaten road, and straight,
He will pause and hesitate;
Lose himself more deeply, view
All things more and more askew.
Burden to himself and others,
Breath he breathes, yet breathing smothers,
Lifeless, though of living kind,
Not despairing, not resigned.
Such an all-adrift career, —
Sad dejection, helpless fear,

Now exulting, now depressed,
Poor enjoyment, broken rest, —
Chains him to the spot that bears him,
And in time for hell prepares him.

FAUST.

O phantoms evil-starred! 'Tis thus you hurt
Man, whensoe'er ye hold him in your fangs;
Even days that might be happy ye pervert
Into a tangle of avoidless pangs.
'Tis hard, I know, from demons to get free;
The strong leash spirits weave few hands may sever;
Yet, mighty and insidious though it be,
Thy power, O Care, I will acknowledge never.

CARE.

Then feel it now! I leave behind
My curse on you, as swift away I wend.
Through their whole lives the race of man is blind;
You, Faust, be blind, now your life nears its end!
[*She breathes upon him.*

FAUST (*blinded*).

Night seems to close in deeper — deepening still;
But all within is radiantly bright;
What I have thought I hasten to fulfil;
The master's bidding, that alone has might.
Up, vassals, from your lairs! Give me to scan
The glad fulfilment of my daring plan.
Up! to your tools! Ply shovel, pick, and spade!
Straight must the work be done, so long delayed.
Stern discipline, and toil intense,
Shall have the amplest recompense.
One mind to guide a thousand hands,
And perfected the work, my noblest, stands!

SCENE IV. — *Great Fore-court of the Palace. Torches.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as overseer, leading the way*).

This way, this way! Come in, you
  Lemures, stumbling, hobbled, —
Abortions, out of sinew,
  Bone, and tendon cobbled!

LEMURES (*in chorus*).

Here we are at your command!
  We've half heard why we came — it
Is all about a stretch of land,
  And we are to reclaim it.
Sharp-pointed stakes, long chains withal,
  To measure with, we've brought in.
On us why you were pleased to call —
  That we have clean forgotten.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The work here needs no artist-touches nice;
To measure from yourselves will quite suffice.
Let him that's tallest lie upon the ground,
And then you others pile the turf all round.
As for our sires they did, prepare
A sunken pit oblong and square.
Out of the palace to the narrow home —
Such is the sorry end to which they all must come.

LEMURES (*digging with elvish gestures*).

In youth when I did live, did love,
  Methought 'twas very sweet;
Where mirth was free, and jollity,
  That place for me was meet.

But age with stealing steps
Hath clawed me with his crutch.
A grave, its door I stumbled o'er;
Why leave they open such?

FAUST (*comes out of the palace, groping by the doorposts*).

The clink of spades! What rapture in the sound!
Hark! multitudes at work to do my bidding,
The soil of what disturbs it ridding,
Imposing on the waves a bound,
And drawing a strong curb the sea around!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

Yet all your labour's spent for us alone.
With your fine dams and bulwarks vast,
You're but preparing a superb repast
For Neptune, the sea-fiend, to feast upon.
You're trumped and done for every way,
Into our hands the elements play,
Destruction onward is striding fast.

FAUST.

Inspector!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here!

FAUST.

Howe'er, where'er you may,
Get labourers, heaps on heaps. Excite
By threats, cajoling, extra pay,
And extra cheer, to work with all their might.
Each day I'd have the tidings brought me, how
The trench is getting on, they're digging now.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*half aloud*).

Their talk to me, it is as if they gave,
Not tidings of a trench, but of — a grave.

FAUST.

The marsh, that spreads hence to the mountain's base,
Empoisons all the land already gained;
But drain the noisome swamp off from the place,
My last, my highest aim were then attained.
Though not quite safe, still there would be broad lands,
Free for the tillage of a million hands!
Fields green and fertile; men and cattle both
Would to the virgin soil draw, nothing loath,
Hedging themselves betimes by dike and mound,
Which their bold busy hands will pile around.
Within, a very paradise; outside,
Howe'er may rage the angry baffled tide,
Striving to sap, to force an entrance, each
And all rush swiftly to close up the breach.
Yes! This one thought absorbs me wholly — rife
With wisdom's final lesson, and most true;
He only merits freedom, merits life,
Who daily has to conquer them anew.
So, girt by danger, shall youth, manhood, age,
Pass kindly here their busy pilgrimage.
Such swarming multitudes I fain would see,
Free people standing on a soil as free;
Then to the passing moment might I say,
"Oh, linger yet, thou art so fair!
So may the traces of my earthly day
Not with the ages fade away in air!"
In the foretaste of such high bliss, I seem
Even now to enjoy that moment all supreme.

[FAUST *sinks back; the* LEMURES *seize him and lay him upon the ground.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Him does no pleasure sate, nor gain content!
From change to change his fancy ever went.
The last vile empty moment fain
Would he, poor creature, as it flies, retain.
He, who defied me with so high a hand,
Time masters him — there lies he on the sand.
The clock stands still —

CHORUS.

Stands still! Hushed as midnight.
The index falls.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It falls; 'tis finished quite!

CHORUS.

'Tis past!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Pshaw! Past? A stupid phrase! Why past?
Past and pure nothingness are one at last!
What boots this evermore creating, when
Things all sweep into nothingness again?
"There! Now 'tis past!" From this what can we glean?
'Tis all the same as though it ne'er had been;
Yet round and round it goes, as though it were.
Eternal Void I, for my part, prefer.

BURIAL.

LEMUR (*solo*).

Who has with shovel and with spade
Built up the house so vilely?

CHORUS OF LEMURES.

For thee, sad guest, in hempen vest,
'Tis finished much too highly.

LEMUR (*solo*).

Who has so badly furnished it?
Chairs, tables, where are any?

CHORUS OF LEMURES.

'Tis snug and strong, not let for long,
The claimants are so many.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The body's down, and if the spirit would
Only come out, I very quickly should
Show it my blood-writ bond; but nowadays
Men have, alas, so very many ways
Of getting souls out of the devil's clutch!
The old way out of date has grown,
The new we do not fancy much —
Else had I managed all alone.
To help from others I must now resort.
We're altogether in a sorry plight.
Long well-established usage, ancient right,
Who can rely on them, or who, in short,
Trust anything to be what once it was?
Once with the latest breath out came the soul:
Like cat on mouse emerging from its hole,
Snap! and I had it fast within my claws!
Now it hangs back, and is averse to quit
The loathsome corpse, that foully harbours it;
The elements, that hate each other, send
It ignominiously packing in the end.
For days and hours, perplex me how I will,

"When?" "How?" and "Where?" is the sad question still.
Old Death has lost his power so swift and stout,
The "Whether" even hangs tediously in doubt.
Ofttimes on rigid limbs I've gloated, then
Found 'twas all sham: they moved, got up again.
[*Fantastic gestures of conjuration.*
Hither away! Faster than e'er you flew,
Lords of the straight, lords of the crookèd horn,
Chips of the old block, devils bred and born,
And bring the jaws of hell along with you!
Hell has jaws manifold, that gape to suit your
Different shades of dignity and rank:
But people, too, in this their final prank,
Will not be so particular in future.
[*The ghastly jaws of Hell open on the left.*
The corner teeth gape wide; from the abyss
The raging stream of fire leaps forward, and I see,
Through whirling smoke and flames, that roar and hiss,
The City of Fire, where flames eternal be.
Up to the very teeth the blazing eddies play:
The damned swim up in hope to 'scape their doom;
But the Hyena crunches them, and they,
Howling in pain, their fiery path resume.
Much more is left to spy in corners there;
In compass small such agony supreme!
Nought could serve better sinful folk to scare;
But they regard it all as lies, and fraud, and dream.
[*To the stout devils, with short straight horns.*
You of the fiery cheeks, you all aglow,
Full fed on brimstone, fat and broad of beam!
Short, clumsy, stiff-necked, watch you here below
If anything like phosphorus shall gleam.
That is the soul, Psyche with wings; these steal,
'Tis then a loathsome worm, and nothing more.
The moment I have stamped it with my seal,
Off with it to where hell's fires whirl and roar!

The nether regions be your care,
Ye paunches! Duty bids you so.
If the soul had its favourite lodging there,
With certainty one cannot know.
Within the navel it delights to dwell;
'Twill give you thence the slip. So watch that well!
[*To the lean devils, with long crooked horns.*
You giants, capering round with limbs disjointed,
Strike out into the air, no pause, but snatch;
Your arms outstretched, your talons sharply pointed,
That you the flighty, fluttering thing may catch!
It finds, no doubt, its ancient home a bore,
And the first wish of genius is to soar.
[*Glory from above on the right. Heavenly host.*

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Kin to the blest above,
Envoys of heavenly love,
Onwards still follow,
Bearing in trust
Pardon to sinners,
Life to the dust!
With slow-beating wings,
As along ye are sped,
On all living things
Benign influence shed!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I hear discordant sounds, a hideous noise,
Come with the unwelcome radiance from above;
A mawkish chant it is of girls and boys,
Such as your canting tricksters dearly love.
You know how we, by curses agonised,
Plotted destruction to the human race:
The most disgraceful things that we devised
Seem to their pious souls not out of place.

They come, a sneaking, hypocritic set, —
So have they snatched from us full many a prize:
With our own arms they fight us; for what yet
Are they, but devils clothed in masking guise?
Lose here, and you're eternally digraced.
To the grave! Cling to its margin! Haste ye, haste!

CHORUS OF ANGELS (*scattering roses*).

Roses that dazzle so,
Balm-breathing, living,
Fluttering to and fro,
Inly life giving,
Floating on leafy wing,
Blossoms half opening,
Hasten to blow!
Scatter around you Spring,
Verdure and glow,
Paradise bring
To the sleeper below!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why do you duck and shrink? Is that hell's wont?
Stand fast, and let them scatter as they may!
Each to his place! Fools, show a steady front
They think, forsooth, with such flower-rubbish they
Can fiery fiends as with snowflakes o'erlay!
Before your breath 'twill shrivel, melt away.
Blow then, ye blowers! Gently, gently there!
The whole troop blench before your scorching air.
Not quite so strong! Shut mouth and nostrils to.
You've blown a deal too fiercely. Pest, that you
To hit the due proportion never learn!
You more than shrivel — you scorch, you wither, burn.
They flutter down with poisonous, piercing flame;
Stand close, and meet them fearlessly! Oh, shame!
What! Quailing still? All courage gone and spent!
A strange, bewitching glow the devils scent.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Flowers, blest and beautiful,
Flames, gladsome, bright,
On hearts that are dutiful
Shed pure delight,
Love every way.
Words with pure truth that ring,
Clear as heavens opening,
To hosts immortal bring
Everywhere day.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Curse on these idiots, ill-bestead!
The Satans turn heels over head!
Round, round like wheels they spin, the paunchy brutes,
And plunge tail-foremost into hell again.
I hope you'll find your well-earned hot bath suits;
But I will here, here at my post remain.
[*Striking aside the roses that hover around him.*
Off, Jack o' Lanterns! Pugh! For all your flash,
Grasped, and what are you but mere loathsome squash?
What! flickering still? Begone with you! They cling
About my neck — like pitch and brimstone sting.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

What with your nature wars,
You must abjure it;
What on your spirit jars,
Do not endure it:
If it will force its way,
Front it we must and may;
Only the loving love
Heavenward can sway.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I burn all over, head, heart, liver, bone!
A hyperdiabolic element! They are
More piercing than the fires of hell by far!
Ha! now I see why ye make such wild moan,
Ye hapless lovers! who, though sweethearts spurn,
To look at them your necks can't choose but turn.
Why to that side is even my head bowed?
I, that to deadly strife with them am vowed!
Time was, to see them set me on the rack.
What strange thing's this has pierced me through and through?
These dear young things are charming to the view;
Why can I curse them not? What holds me back?
And if I let them o'er me mastery get,
Who then henceforward may be called the fool?
The pretty rascals, I detest them, yet
They strike me as by much too beautiful;
Fair children, pray inform me, are you not
Of the great race of Lucifer begot?
You are so pretty, fain I'd kiss you; you,
Methinks, appear at the right moment, too.
It is so nice, so natural, as though
I'd met with you a thousand times before.
You set one's concupiscence all aglow;
Each time I look, you charm me more and more.
Come nearer! Oh, vouchsafe me but one glance!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Behold us! Why recoil as we advance?
We still advance; if stay thou canst, then stay!
[*The angels drawing around occupy the whole space.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who is thrust into the proscenium*).

You rail at us as spirits damned, and you
Are of sheer wizardrie the masters true;

For you lead man and womankind astray.
How cursèd this adventure is!
Love's element, can it be this?
A raging fire fills all my frame;
Scarce on my neck I feel the scorching flame.
You hover to and fro; come down, and sway
Your gracious limbs in somewhat worldlier way.
It suits you well, I grant, that earnest style,
Yet fain I'd see you but one moment smile;
That were for me beyond all utterance sweet:
A smile, I mean, like that when lovers meet.
A slight turn of the mouth — the thing is done.
You there, tall, shapely lad, I like the best:
'Tis wrong to clothe you in a priestly vest.
Give me one loving glance, one, only one!
A scantier robe, too, were more seemly, kind;
These sweeping folds too decent are by far.
They turn about! To view them from behind —
They're quite too toothsome, the young rogues, they are!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Ye loving flames, quicken
More clearly and calm,
To souls remorse-stricken
Let truth bring a balm!
So themselves from the thrall
Of the ill they may wrest,
Thenceforth in the All-in-all
Merge and be blest!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*pulling himself together*).

How is't with me? Like Job, from head to heels,
All boils, a horror to one's self; but yet
Triumphant, when one probes himself, and feels
Reliance on himself and on his race.
The noble devil-parts all keep their place;
'Tis but skin-deep this lickerish fuss and fret;

Those plaguey flames already are burnt out,
And now I curse ye all, right round about!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

The man o'er whom
You, holy flames, brood,
Is purged from death's gloom,
Lives blest with the good.
In unison blending,
Sing, upwards ascending;
The air, it is purified,
Spirit, breathe free!

[*They ascend, bearing away with them the immortal part of* FAUST.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*looking around*).

But how is this? Where have they gone?
Ye milksop chits, you have outwitted me!
Away to heaven they've with their booty flown;
That's why they nibbled at this grave, I see!
Great and unique the prize they have withdrawn
Out of my very fingers. The high soul,
That by its own free act I held in pawn,
They've filched away, clean out of my control.
And now to whom shall I complain? Who, who
Will vindicate for me my well-earned right?
In your old days you've been bamboozled; you
Have well deserved your present direful plight.
I've bungled quite discreditably, — great
Outlay have lost, and shamefully withal;
Let vulgar lust, a silly amorous heat,
The devil's tough well-seasoned self enthral.
If after all that he has seen and known,
He lets such childish stuff his wits benumb,
Not small the folly is, I needs must own,
That to such weakness could at last succumb.

SCENE V. — *Mountain Defiles, Forest, Rock, Wilderness.*

HOLY ANCHORITES.

(*Dispersed along the slopes, stationed among the clefts*).

CHORUS AND ECHO.

Forests are waving here,
Rocks beetle vast and sheer,
Roots to the ground are braced,
Stem thick with stem enlaced;
Brooks leap and sparkle clear,
Sheltering caves darkle near;
Harmlessly gliding round,
Dumb lions roam,
Honour the hallowed ground,
Love's blessèd home.

PATER ECSTATICUS (*hovering up and down*).

Joy evermore burning,
Love's fiery yearning,
Heart-anguish glowing,
God's bliss o'erflowing.
Arrows, pierce through me,
Lances, subdue me,
Clubs, crush, confound me,
Lightnings, flash round me!
Kill every trace in me
Of what is base in me!
Shine, star, evermore,
Eternal love's core!

PATER PROFUNDUS (*lower region*).

As the rock chasm here at my feet
Rests all its weight on yon deep chasm beneath;

As countless sparkling rills together meet,
Ere in the torrent's fall they foam and seethe;
As the tree-stem shoots evermore above,
High and more high by its own inward strain,—
Such and so worketh the Almighty Love,
That mouldeth all things, and doth all sustain.
Around me here is a tumultuous roaring,
As though the wood and precipices shook;
And yet 'tis only the delightsome pouring,
Down the steep cleft, of the abounding brook,
Will fertilise anon the valley near.
The lightning, which spread wreck and death before,
Does it not serve to purge the atmosphere,
That vapour in its breast and poison bore?
Envoys of love are these; and they proclaim
What, evermore creating, girds us round.
Oh, may't in me, too, light a holy flame,
When my chilled soul, in chains of anguish bound,
Perplexed with thronging doubts, and ill at ease,
Is tossing to and fro, and sunk in gloom!
O God, my torturing thoughts appease,
My hungering heart illume!

PATER SERAPHICUS (*middle region*).

Through the pine-trees' waving tresses,
Lo, a dawn-cloud onward rolls!
And within it, such my guess, is
Borne a choir of infant souls.

CHORUS OF BLESSED BOYS.

Tell us whither we are going—
Father, tell us, who are we?
Happy are we; bliss o'erflowing
To us all it is, To Be.

PATER SERAPHICUS.

Boys, at dead of midnight born,
Soul and sense but half awake,
Straightway from your parents torn,
Rank with angel hosts to take!
Come, draw near; obey your feeling:
One is here whose love is true.
Happy ye! no trace revealing
Of earth's rugged ways in you.
Drop into my eyes, an organ
  Fit for man and earthly sphere;
Use them as your own, to gaze on
  All that lies around us here!
[*He takes them into himself.*[1]
These are trees; these, rocky ridges;
  This a river, that its steep
Down-rush to the chasm abridges
  By one mighty arching leap.

BLESSED BOYS (*from within*).

'Tis all grand, but sad it makes us —
  'Tis too sombre, too immense;
With uneasy dread it shakes us, —
  Father, father, take us hence!

PATER SERAPHICUS.

Mount to higher spheres supernal,
Ever, all unconscious, grow;

[1] Mr. Bayard Taylor quotes, in an explanatory note on this passage, the following extract from a letter by Goethe in 1806 to Wolf, the author of the "Prolegomena" to Homer: "Why can I not at once, honoured friend, on receiving your letter, sink myself for a short time in your being, like those Swedenborgian spirits who sometimes receive permission to enter into the organs of sense of their master, and through the medium of these to behold the world?"

By God's influence eternal,
Through His presence, strengthened so!
For, sublimed there, reigns the healing
Power, that feeds the spirit's mood;
Everlasting love's revealing,
Quickening pure beatitude.

CHORUS OF BLESSED BOYS (*circling round the top-most peak*).

Hands intertwine in
A circling ring,
Feelings divine in
Gladsomeness sing!
God teaches you; hear Him,
Trust in His grace:
You, who revere Him,
Shall look on His face!

ANGELS (*hovering in the higher sphere, bearing the immortal part of* FAUST).

Rescued from the Evil One
Is our brother's soul here;
Who hath nobly wrestled, run,
Him can we enrol here.
And if 'twas love divine's behest
That sin should not defeat him,
Then will the spirits of the blest
With cordial welcome greet him.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS.

Roses that from hands were sent,
Loving — holy — penitent,
Helped us to inflict defeat,
And our lofty task complete,
Rescuing this precious soul
From the Evil One's control.

As we strewed them on their head,
Demons shrank and devils fled.
Not the wonted pangs of hell,
But love's anguish on them fell.
Even the Arch-Fiend with pain
Quivered, pierced through every vein.
Shout aloud through all the sky!
We have triumphed! Victory!

THE MORE ADVANCED ANGELS.

Alas! still with earthly taint
Is he encumbered,
Not yet with the pure, a saint,
May he be numbered.
When spirit-force strong
Hath the earthly attracted,
And this with itself has
Inwoven and compacted,
No angels can part what
Is twofold, yet one,
By Love Everlasting
This alone may be done.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS.

Round yonder peak on high,
Mist-like and trailing,
Spirits of good I spy
Hitherward sailing.
Now clears the cloud away;
I see a bright array
Circling and soaring,
Boys, blessèd boys they be,
Set from earth's burden free,
Rapt and adoring;
Drinking in quickened life

From all the beauty rife,
Fresh to their gaze unfurled,
Here in the upper world.
Let him, where they begin
Perfected bliss to win,
Be mated with them!

THE BLESSED BOYS.

Him we are fain to
Receive as a chrysalis;
Thus we attain to
The pledge of angelic bliss.
Loosen the films of earth
He is still heir to;
E'en now in his second birth
He is great, — fair too!

DOCTOR MARIANUS (*in the highest, purest cell*).

Here the outlook is free,
The spirit aspiring!
Women I yonder see
Floating up, quiring.
Midmost, in wondrous sheen,
Star-crowned and beaming,
Lo! there is Heaven's queen,
Gloriously gleaming! [*Enraptured.*

Ruler of sky and earth below,
In Thy azure vaulted,
Unto me vouchsafe to show
Thy mystery exalted!
Bless all that in man's heart hath fired
Emotions gentler, dearer,
And, with a saintly love inspired,
To Thee still draws it nearer!

If Thy behests inspire our will,
What then may daunt or curb it?
But if Thou biddest us be still,
Our calm, what may disturb it?
Virgin pure from spot or taint,
Mother, holy, tender,
Queen, elect of us, and saint,
Throned with God in splendour!

Light cloudlets free
Around her are bent;
Women they be,
That have sinned and repent —
Sinned in their weakness
Of nature too tender,
Now in all meekness
Kneeling to render
Lowly contrition,
Imploring remission
Of sins from her grace.

To thee, whom passion could not touch,
Still, still it hath been granted,
That those who fall, through loving much,
May come with trust undaunted.
'Tis hard from ruin to defend
Them, so their weakness blindeth;
And who by his own strength may rend
The fetters passion bindeth!
How on smooth slippery slope the feet
Slide swift to their undoing!
Whom fool not words and glances sweet,
And flattery's subtle wooing?

MATER GLORIOSA *comes floating forward.*

CHORUS OF REPENTANT WOMEN.

Upward thou'rt soaring
To regions eternal;

Hear our imploring,
Thou, peerless, supernal,
Thou rich to o'erflowing
In pardoning grace!

MAGNA PECCATRIX (*St. Luke* vii. 36–50).

By the love, that bent in weeping
O'er thy Son, divinely born,
His feet with balmy teardrops steeping,
Spite of Pharisaic scorn;
By the box, that dropped profusely
Ointment precious, odour fine;
By the tresses clustering loosely,
That did wipe the limbs divine!

MULIER SAMARITANA (*St. John* iv. 4–42).

By the spring, whereto in dim
Far ages Abraham's flocks were led;
By the pitcher's cooling rim,
That touched His lips, the Saviour dread;
By the clear, full source that now
Wells out there in stream abundant,
Through the universe to flow,
Ever sparkling and redundant!

MARIA ÆGYPTIACA.

By that hallowed spot and dear,
Where was laid the Lord Immortal;
By the arm in warning clear
Raised, that thrust me from its portal;
By the forty years I passed,
In deserts lone, of true repentance;
By what on the sand at last
I traced, a blessèd farewell sentence![1]

[1] "Mary of Egypt," says Mr. Bayard Taylor, "is described in the 'Acta Sanctorum' as an infamous woman of Alexandria,

THE THREE.

Thou, who from the greatly sinning
Never dost avert Thy face,
Still for their repentance winning
An eternal resting-place,
To her, who only once forgot
Herself, vouchsafe Thy blessing —
To her, who fell, yet weeted not
Wherein she was transgressing!

UNA PENITENTIUM (*formerly called* GRETCHEN).

Incline, incline,
Thou peerless one, bright
With effulgence of light,
Unto my bliss thy glance benign!
My early love, my lover,
All trial, struggle over,
Returns to me — is mine!

THE BLESSED BOYS (*circling round and drawing near*).

Already us far above
Towers he in might;
Richly our fost'ring love
Will he requite.
From life were we brought, ere
Its lessons could reach us;
But he hath been taught there,
And he will teach us.

who, after seventeen years of vice, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On approaching the door of the Holy Sepulchre, an invisible arm thrust her away. Weeping, overcome with the sudden sense of her unworthiness, she prayed to the Virgin, and was then lifted as by hands and borne into the Temple, and a voice said to her: 'Go beyond the Jordan, and thou wilt find peace.' She went into the desert, where she lived alone forty-eight years, only visited by a monk, who brought her the last Sacrament, and for whom, when she died, she left a message written upon the sand." — *Bayard Taylor's Translation of* "*Faust*" vol. ii. p. 461.

UNA PENITENTIUM.

In rapt amazement he is lost,
While round the choir celestial shineth;
He grows so like the heavenly host,
That his fresh life he scarce divineth.
Lo, every bond of earth hath he
Off with its whilom vesture flung,
And, in celestial panoply
Arrayed, comes stately forth and young!
Vouchsafe, I may his teacher be —
Still dazzles him the unwonted light.

MATER GLORIOSA.

Come! Mount to higher spheres! and he
Will follow, holding thee in sight.

DOCTOR MARIANUS (*prostrate on his face in prayer*).

Touched hearts, that true repentance know,
Gaze on those pitying eyes,
And, ever grateful, ever grow
More meet for Paradise!
May every better thought serene
Be to thy service given!
Oh, bless us, Virgin, Mother, Queen,
Omnipotent in heaven!

CHORUS MYSTICUS.

All in earth's fleeting state
As symbol is still meant;
Here the inadequate
Grows to fulfilment;
Here is wrought the inscrutable,
To silence that awes us;

Love eternal, immutable,
On, ever on, draws us.[1]

[1] Goethe would have saved a world of futile conjecture had it occurred to him to explain to his friend Eckermann, among the many things in this work which he did explain, what is meant by the two concluding lines —

Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

Mr. Bayard Taylor says: "I can find no English equivalent for *Ewig-Weibliche* except 'woman-soul,' which will express very nearly the same idea to those who feel the spirit which breathes and burns throughout the scene. Love is the all-uplifting and all-redeeming power on earth and in heaven; and to man it is revealed in its most pure and perfect form through woman. Thus, in the transitory life of earth, it is only a symbol of its diviner being; the possibilities of love, which earth can never fulfil, become realities in the higher life which follows; the spirit, which woman interprets to us here, still draws us upward (as Margaret draws the soul of Faust) there." After all, does this mean more than a suggestion, that love, the feminine element ("not to speak it profanely") in the Divine Being is ever working through eternity to draw His creatures onward and upward to a higher and purer state of being?

Clavigo

Introduction to Clavigo

THE story on which Clavigo is founded is not only an authentic one, but the circumstances occurred only ten years before the publication of the play. They are as follows: Beaumarchais (the well-known French writer) had two sisters living in Madrid, one married to an architect, the other, Marie, engaged to Clavijo, a young author without fortune. No sooner had Clavijo obtained an office which he had long solicited than he refused to fulfil his promise. Beaumarchais hurried to Madrid; his object was twofold: to save the reputation of his sister, and to put a little speculation of his own on foot. He sought Clavijo, and by his *sang-froid* and courage extorted from him a written avowal of his contemptible conduct. No sooner is this settled than Clavijo, alarmed at the consequences, solicits a reconciliation with Marie, offering to marry her. Beaumarchais consents, but just as the marriage is about to take place he learns that Clavijo is secretly conspiring against him, accusing him of having extorted the marriage by force, in consequence of which he has procured an order from the government to expel Beaumarchais from Madrid. Irritated at such villainy, Beaumarchais goes to the ministers, reaches the king, and avenges himself by getting Clavijo dismissed from his post.

This story was published by Beaumarchais under title of a "Mémoire," in the year 1774; the circumstances having occurred in 1764. Goethe once, at a

friendly meeting, read the recently published Mémoire, and in the conversation that ensued promised to produce a play on the subject in the course of the following week. He fulfilled his promise, and it will be seen how closely, with the exception of the tragic *dénouement*, he adhered to the original story. The real Clavijo subsequently became a man of considerable eminence in Madrid, though Goethe could not have been aware of his existence when he wrote the play.[1]

It belongs to the period just after the composition of "Werther," and is one of the less important of his literary works; but the exceedingly dramatic presentation of the incidents has given it great popularity on the German stage, and helped considerably to establish the fame of the author.

[1] The above details are derived from Mr. G. H. Lewes's "Life of Goethe."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CLAVIGO.
CARLOS, his friend.
BEAUMARCHAIS.
MARIE BEAUMARCHAIS.
SOPHIE GUILBERT (née BEAUMARCHAIS).
GUILBERT, her husband.
BUENCO.
ST. GEORGE.

The scene is at Madrid.

Clavigo

ACT I.

SCENE I. — CLAVIGO'S *Dwelling.*

Enter CLAVIGO *and* CARLOS.

CLAVIGO. (*rising up from the writing-table*) The journal will do a good work, it must charm all women. Tell me, Carlos, do you not think that my weekly periodical is now one of the first in Europe?

CARLOS. We Spaniards, at least, have no modern author who unites such great strength of thought, so much florid imagination, with so brilliant and easy a style.

CLAVIGO. Please don't. I must still be among the people the creator of the good style; people are ready to take all sorts of impressions; I have a reputation among my fellow citizens, their confidence: and, between ourselves, my acquirements extend daily; my experience widens, and my style becomes ever truer and stronger.

CARLOS. Good, Clavigo! Yet, if you will not take it ill, your paper pleased me far better when you yet wrote it at Marie's feet, when the lovely cheerful creature had still an influence over you. I know not how, the whole had a more youthful blooming appearance.

CLAVIGO. Those were good times, Carlos, which are now gone. I gladly avow to thee, I wrote then with opener heart; and, it is true, she had a large share in the approbation which the public accorded me at the very beginning. But at length, Carlos, one becomes very soon weary of women; and were you not the first to applaud my resolution, when I determined to forsake her?

CARLOS. You would have become rusty. Women are far too monotonous. Only, it seems to me, it were again time that you cast about for a new plan, for it is all up when one is so entirely aground.

CLAVIGO. My plan is the court; there there is no leisure nor holiday. For a stranger, who, without standing, without name, without fortune, came here, have I not already advanced far enough? Here in a court! amid the throng of men, where it is not easy to attract attention? I do so rejoice, when I look on the road I have left behind me. Loved by the first in the kingdom! Honoured for my attainments, my rank! Recorder of the king! Carlos, all that spurs me on! I were nothing if I remained what I am. Forward! forward! There it costs toil and art! One needs all his wits; and the women! the women! one loses far too much time with them.

CARLOS. Simpleton, that is your fault. I can never live without women, and they are not in my way at all. Moreover, I do not say so very many fine things to them, I do not amuse myself entire months with sentiment and such like; for I do not at all like to have to do with prudish girls. One has soon said his say with them: afterward, if you have carried on with them for awhile, scarcely have they been warmed up a little, when straightway — the deuce — you are pestered with thoughts of marriage and promises of marriage, which I fear as the plague. You are pensive, Clavigo?

CLAVIGO. I cannot get rid of the recollection that I jilted, deceived Marie, call it as you will.

CARLOS. Wonderful! It seems to me, however, that one lives only once in this world, has only once this power, these prospects, and he who does not make the most of them, and rise as high as possible, is a fool. And to marry! to marry just at the time when life is for the first time about to soar aloft on widespread pinions! to bury one's self in domestic repose, to shut one's self up when one has not traversed the half of his journey — has not yet achieved the half of his conquests! To love her was natural; to promise her marriage was folly, and if you had kept your word it would have been downright madness.

CLAVIGO. Hold! I do not understand men. I loved her truly, she drew me to her, she held me, and as I sat at her feet I vowed to her — I vowed to myself — that it should ever be so, that I would be hers as soon as I had an office, a position — and now, Carlos!

CARLOS. It will be quite time enough when you are a made man, when you have reached the desired goal, if then — to crown and confirm all your happiness — you seek to ally yourself by a prudent marriage with a family of wealth and consequence.

CLAVIGO. She has vanished! quite out of my heart vanished, and if her unhappiness does not sometimes remind me — strange that one is so changeable!

CARLOS. If one were constant I should wonder. Look, pray, does not everything in the world change? Why should our passions endure? Be tranquil; she is not the first jilted girl, nor the first that has consoled herself. If I were to advise you, there is the young widow over the way —

CLAVIGO. You know I do not set much store on such proposals. A love affair which does not come of its own accord has no charm for me.

CARLOS. So dainty people!

CLAVIGO. Be it so, and forget not that our chief work at present is, to render ourselves necessary to the new minister. That Whal resigns the government of India is troublesome enough for us. In truth, otherwise it does not disquiet me; his influence abides — Grimaldi and he are friends, and we know how to talk and manœuvre.

CARLOS. And think and do what we will.

CLAVIGO. That is the grand point in the world. (*Rings for the servant.*) Take this sheet to the printing-office.

CARLOS. Are you to be seen in the evening?

CLAVIGO. I do not think so. However, you can inquire.

CARLOS. This evening I should like to undertake something which gladdened my heart; all this afternoon I must write again, there is no end of it.

CLAVIGO. Have patience. If we did not toil for so many persons we would not get the ascendancy over so many. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — GUILBERT'S *Dwelling.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE, *and* DON BUENCO.

BUENCO. You have had a bad night?

SOPHIE. I told her so yesterday evening. She was so foolishly merry and prattled till eleven, then she was overheated, could not sleep, and now again she has no breath and weeps the whole morning.

MARIE. Strange that our brother comes not! It is two days past the time.

SOPHIE. Only have patience, he will not fail us.

MARIE. (*rising*) How anxious I am to see this brother, my avenger and my saviour. I scarcely remember him.

SOPHIE. Indeed! Oh, I can well picture him to myself; he was a fiery, open, brave boy of thirteen when our father sent us here.

MARIE. A noble great soul. You have read the letter which he wrote when he learnt my unhappiness; each character of it is enshrined in my heart. "If you are guilty," writes he, "expect no forgiveness; over and above your misery the contempt of a brother will fall heavy upon you, and the curse of a father. If you are innocent, oh, then, all vengeance, all, all glowing vengeance on the traitor!" I tremble! He will come. I tremble, not for myself, I stand before God in my innocence! You must, my friends — I know not what I want! O Clavigo!

SOPHIE. You will not listen! You will kill yourself.

MARIE. I will be still. Yes, I will not weep. It seems to me, however, I could have no more tears. And why tears? I am only sorry that I make my life bitter to you. For when all is said and done, what have I to complain of? I have had much joy as long as our old friend still lived. Clavigo's love has caused me much joy, perhaps more than mine for him. And now what is it after all? of what importance am I? What matters it if a girl's heart is broken? What matters it whether she pines away and torments her poor young heart?

BUENCO. For God's sake, mademoiselle!

MARIE. Whether it is all one to *him* — that he loves me no more? Ah! why am I not more amiable? But *he* should pity, at least pity me! — that the hapless girl, to whom he had made himself so needful, now without him should pine and weep her life away — Pity! I wish not to be pitied by this man.

SOPHIE. If I could teach you to despise him — the worthless, detestable man.

MARIE. No, sister, worthless he is not; and must I then despise him whom I hate? Hate! Indeed, some-

times I can hate him — sometimes, when the Spanish spirit possesses me. Lately, oh! lately, when we met him, his look wrought full, warm love in me! And as I again came home, and his manner recurred to me, and the calm, cold glance that he cast over me, while beside the brilliant donna; then I became a Spaniard in my heart, and seized my dagger and poison, and disguised myself. Are you amazed, Buenco? All in thought only, of course!

SOPHIE. Foolish girl!

MARIE. My imagination led me after him. I saw him as he lavished all the tenderness, all the gentleness at the feet of his new love — the charms with which he poisoned me — I aimed at the heart of the traitor! Ah! Buenco! — all at once the good-hearted French girl was again there, who knows of no love-sickness, and no daggers for revenge. We are badly off! Vaudevilles to entertain our lovers, fans to punish them, and, if they are faithless? — Say, sister, what do they do in France when lovers are faithless?

SOPHIE. They curse them.

MARIE. And —

SOPHIE. And let them go their ways.

MARIE. Go! — and why shall not I let Clavigo go? If that is the French fashion, why shall it not be so in Spain? Why shall a Frenchwoman not be a Frenchwoman in Spain? We will let him go, and take to ourselves another; it appears to me they do so with us, too.

BUENCO. He has broken a sacred promise, and no light love-affair, no friendly attachment. Mademoiselle, you are pained, hurt even to the depths of your heart. Oh! never was my position of an unknown, peaceful citizen of Madrid so burdensome, so painful as at this moment, in which I feel myself so feeble, so powerless to obtain justice for you against the treacherous courtier!

"I hold you in my arms"

Photogravure from original drawing by A. Langhammer

MARIE. When he was still Clavigo, not yet recorder of the king; when he was still the stranger, the guest, the newcomer in our house, how amiable he was, how good! How all his ambition, all his desire to rise, seemed to be a child of his love! For me he struggled for name, rank, fortune; he has all now, and I!—

GUILBERT *comes.*

GUILBERT. (*privately to his wife*) Our brother is coming!

MARIE. My brother? (*She trembles; they conduct her to a seat.*) Where? where? Bring him to me! Take me to him!

BEAUMARCHAIS *comes.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. My sister! (*Quitting the eldest to rush toward the youngest.*) My sister! My friends! O my sister!

MARIE. Is it you, indeed? God be thanked it is you!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Let me regain composure.

MARIE. My heart! — my poor heart!

SOPHIE. Be calm. Dear brother, I hoped to see you more tranquil.

BEAUMARCHAIS. More tranquil! Are you, then, tranquil? Do I not behold in the wasted figure of this dear one, in your tearful eyes, your sorrowful paleness, in the dead silence of your friends, that you are as wretched as I have imagined you to be during all the long way? and more wretched; for I see you, I hold you in my arms; your presence redoubles my sufferings. O my sister!

SOPHIE. And our father?

BEAUMARCHAIS. He blesses you, and me, if I save you.

BUENCO. Sir, permit one unknown, who, at the first look, recognises in you a noble, brave man, to bear witness to the deep interest which all this matter inspires in me. Sir, you undertake this long journey to save, to avenge your sister! Welcome! be welcome as a guardian angel, though, at the same time, you put us all to the blush!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I hoped, sir, to find in Spain such hearts as yours; that encouraged me to take this step. Nowhere, nowhere in the world are feeling, congenial souls wanting, if only one steps forward whose circumstances leave him full freedom to carry his courage through. And oh, my friends, I feel full of hope! Everywhere there are men of honour among the powerful and great, and the ear of majesty is rarely deaf; only our voice is almost always too weak to reach to their height.

SOPHIE. Come, sister! come, rest a moment. She is quite beside herself. [*They lead her away.*

MARIE. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. God willing, if you are innocent, then all, all vengeance on the traitor! (*Exeunt* MARIE *and* SOPHIE.) My brother! — my friends! — I see it in your looks that you are so. Let me regain composure and then! — a pure impartial recital of the whole story. This must determine my actions. The feeling of a good cause shall confirm my courage; and, believe me, if we are right, we shall get justice.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — CLAVIGO'S *House.*

CLAVIGO. Who may these Frenchmen be, that have got themselves announced in my house? Frenchmen! In former days this nation was welcome to me!

And why not now? It is singular that a man who sets so much at nought is yet bound with feeble thread to a single point. It is too much! And did I owe more to Marie than to myself? and is it a duty to make myself unhappy because a girl loves me?

A SERVANT.

SERVANT. The foreign gentlemen, sir.

CLAVIGO. Bid them enter. Pray, did you tell their servant that I expect them to breakfast?

SERVANT. As you ordered.

CLAVIGO. I shall be back presently. [*Exit.*

BEAUMARCHAIS — ST. GEORGE.

The SERVANT *places chairs for them and withdraws.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. I feel so much at ease; so content, my friend, to be at length here, to hold him; he shall not escape me. Be calm: at least show him a calm exterior. My sister! my sister! who could believe that you are as innocent as you are unhappy? It shall come to light; you shall be terribly avenged! And Thou, good God! preserve to me the tranquillity of soul which Thou accordest to me at this moment, that, amid this frightful grief, I may act as prudently as possible and with all moderation.

ST. GEORGE. Yes; this wisdom — all the prudence, my friend, you have ever shown — I claim now. Promise me once more, dear friend, that you will reflect where you are. In a strange kingdom, where all your protectors, all your money cannot secure you from the secret machinations of worthless foes.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Be tranquil: play your part well; he shall not know with which of us he has to do. I will torture him! Oh, I am just in a fine humour to roast this fellow over a slow fire!

CLAVIGO *returns.*

CLAVIGO. Gentlemen, it gives me joy to see in my house men of a nation that I have always esteemed.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir, I wish that we, too, may be worthy of the honour which you are good enough to confer on our fellow countrymen.

ST. GEORGE. The pleasure of making your acquaintance has surmounted the fear of being troublesome to you.

CLAVIGO. Persons, whom the first look recommends, should not push modesty so far.

BEAUMARCHAIS. In truth it cannot be a novelty to you to be sought out by strangers; for by the excellence of your writings, you have made yourself as much known in foreign lands as the important offices which his Majesty has entrusted to you distinguish you in your fatherland.

CLAVIGO. The king looks with much favour on my humble services, and the public with much indulgence on the trifling essays of my pen; I have wished that I could contribute in some measure to the improvement of taste, to the propagation of the sciences in my country; for they only unite us with other nations, they only make friends of the most distant spirits, and maintain the sweetest union among those even, who, alas! are too often disunited through political interests.

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is captivating to hear a man so speak who has equal influence in the state and in letters. I must also avow you have taken the word out of my mouth and brought me straight to the purpose, on account of which you see me here. A society of learned, worthy men has commissioned me, in every place through which I travel and find opportunity, to establish a correspondence between them and the best minds in the kingdom. As no Spaniard writes better than the author of the journal called the *Thinker* — a

man with whom I have the honour to speak (CLAVIGO *makes a polite bow*), and who is an especial ornament of learned men, since he has known how to unite with his literary talents so great a capacity for political affairs, he cannot fail to climb the highest steps of which his character and acquirements render him worthy. I believe I can perform no more acceptable service to my friends than to put them in connection with a man of such merit.

CLAVIGO. No proposal in the world could be more agreeable to me, gentlemen; I thereby see fulfilled the sweetest hopes, with which my heart was often occupied without any prospect of their happy accomplishment. Not that I believe I shall be able, through my correspondence, to satisfy the wishes of your learned friends; my vanity does not go so far. But as I have the happiness to be in accordance with the best minds in Spain, as nothing can remain unknown to me which is achieved in our vast kingdom by isolated, often obscure, individuals for the arts and sciences, I have looked upon myself, till now, as a kind of colporteur, who possesses the feeble merit of rendering the inventions of others generally useful; but now I become, through your intervention, a merchant, happy enough through the exportation of native products to extend the renown of his fatherland and thereby to enrich it with foreign treasures. So then, allow me, sir, to treat as not a stranger a man who, with such frankness, brings such agreeable news; allow me to ask what business — what project made you undertake this long journey? It is not that I would, through this officiousness, gratify vain curiosity; no, believe rather that it is with the purest intention of exerting in your behalf all the resources, all the influence which I may perchance possess; for I tell you beforehand, you have come to a place where countless difficulties encounter a stranger in

the prosecution of his business, especially at the court.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I accept so obliging an offer with warmest thanks. I have no secrets with you, sir, nor will this friend be in the way during my statement; he is sufficiently acquainted with what I have to say. (CLAVIGO *looks at* ST. GEORGE *with attention.*) A French merchant, with a large family and a limited fortune, had many business friends in Spain. One of the richest came to Paris fifteen years ago, and made him this proposal: "Give me two of your daughters, and I shall take them with me to Madrid and provide for them. I am not married, am getting old and have no relatives; they will form the happiness of my declining years, and after my decease I shall leave them one of the most considerable establishments in Spain. The eldest and one of the younger sisters were confided to his care. The father undertook to supply the house with all kinds of French merchandise which might be required, and so all went well till the friend died without the least mention of the Frenchwomen in his will, who then saw themselves in the embarrassing position of superintending alone a new business. The eldest had meanwhile married, and notwithstanding their moderate fortune, they secured through their good conduct and varied accomplishments a multitude of friends who were eager to extend their credit and business. (CLAVIGO *becomes more and more attentive.*) About the same time a young man, a native of the Canary Islands, had got himself introduced into the family. (CLAVIGO'S *countenance loses all cheerfulness, and his seriousness changes gradually into embarrassment, more and more visible.*) Despite his humble standing and fortune they received him kindly. The Frenchwomen, remarking in him a great love of the French language, favoured him with every means of making rapid progress in its study.

Extremely anxious to make himself known, he forms the design of giving to the city of Madrid the pleasure, hitherto unknown to Spain, of reading a weekly periodical in the style of the English *Spectator*. His lady friends fail not to aid him in every way; they do not doubt that such an undertaking would meet with great success; in short, animated by the hope of soon becoming a man of some consequence, he ventures to make an offer of marriage to the younger. Hopes are held out to him. "Try to make your fortune," quoth the elder, "and if an appointment, the favour of the court, or any other means of subsistence shall have given you a right to think of my sister, if she still prefers you to other suitors, I cannot refuse you my consent." (CLAVIGO, *covered with confusion, moves uneasily on his seat.*) The younger declines several advantageous offers; her fondness for the man increases, and helps her to bear the anxiety of an uncertain expectation; she interests herself for his happiness as for her own, and encourages him to issue the first number of his periodical, which appears under an imposing title. (CLAVIGO *is terribly embarrassed.* BEAUMARCHAIS, *icy cold.*) The success of the journal was astonishing; the king even, delighted with this charming production, gave the author public tokens of his favour. He was promised the first honourable office that might be vacant. From that moment he removed all rivals from his beloved, while quite openly striving hard to win her good graces. The marriage was delayed only in expectation of the promised situation. At last, after six years' patient waiting, unbroken friendship, aid, and love on the part of the girl; after six years' devotion, gratitude, attentions, solemn assurances on the part of the man, the office is forthcoming — and he vanishes. (CLAVIGO *utters a deep sigh, which he tries to stifle, and is quite overcome.*) The matter had made so great a noise in the world that the issue could not be regarded

with indifference. A house had been rented for two families. The whole town was talking of it. The hearts of all friends were wrung and sought revenge. Application was made to powerful protectors; but the worthless fellow, already initiated in the cabals of the court, knew how to render fruitless all their efforts, and went so far in his insolence as to dare to threaten the unhappy ladies; to dare to say, in the very face of those friends who had gone to find him, that the Frenchwomen should take care; he defied them to injure him, and if they made bold to undertake aught against him, it would be easy for him to ruin them in a foreign land, where they would be without protection and help. At this intelligence the poor girl fell into convulsions, which threatened death. In the depth of her grief, the elder wrote to France about the public outrage which had been done to them. The news most powerfully moves her brother; he demands leave of absence to obtain counsel and aid in so complicated an affair, he flies from Paris to Madrid, and the brother — it is I! who have left all — my country, duties, family, standing, pleasures, in order to avenge, in Spain, an innocent, unhappy sister. I come, armed with the best cause and firm determination to unmask a traitor, to mark with bloody strokes his soul on his face, and the traitor — art thou!

CLAVIGO. Hear me, sir — I am — I have — I doubt not —

BEAUMARCHAIS. Interrupt me not. You have nothing to say to me and much to hear from me. Now, to make a beginning, have the goodness, in the presence of this gentleman, who has come from France expressly with me, to declare whether my sister has deserved this public outrage from you through any treachery, levity, weakness, rudeness, or any other blemish.

CLAVIGO. No, sir. Your sister, Donna Maria, is a lady overflowing with wit, amiability, and goodness.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Has she ever during your acquaintance given you any occasion to complain of her or to esteem her less?

CLAVIGO. Never! never!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*rising*) And why, monster, had you the barbarity to torture the girl to death? Only because her heart preferred you to ten others, all more honourable and richer than you?

CLAVIGO. Ah, sir! If you knew how I have been instigated; how I, through manifold advisers and circumstances —

BEAUMARCHAIS. Enough! (*To* ST. GEORGE.) You have heard the vindication of my sister; go and publish it. What I have further to say to the gentleman, needs no witnesses. (CLAVIGO *rises.* ST. GEORGE *retires.*) Stay! Stay! (*Both sit down again.*) Having now got so far, I shall make a proposal to you, which I hope you will accept. It is equally agreeable to you and to me that you do not wed Marie, and you are deeply sensible that I have not come to play the part of a theatrical brother, who will unravel the drama, and present a husband to his sister. You have cast a slur upon an honourable lady in cold blood because you supposed that in a foreign land she was without prop and avenger. Thus acts a base, worthless fellow. And so, first of all, testify with your own hand, spontaneously, with open doors, in presence of your servants, that you are an abominable man, who have deceived, betrayed my sister without the least cause; and with this declaration I will set out for Aranjuez, where our ambassador resides; I will show it, get it printed, and the day after to-morrow the court and the town shall be flooded with it. I have powerful friends here, I have time and money, and of all shall I avail myself to pursue you in the most furious

manner possible till the resentment of my sister is appeased and satisfied, and she herself says "Stop."

CLAVIGO. I will not make such a declaration.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I believe you, for in your place I should, perhaps, not make it either. But here is the reverse of the medal. If you do not write it I shall remain beside you, from this moment I shall not quit you. I shall follow you everywhere, till you, disgusted with such society, will have sought to get rid of me behind Buenretiro. If I am more fortunate than you, without seeing the ambassador, without speaking here with any one, I take my dying sister in my arms, place her in my carriage, and return to France with her. Should fate favour you, I am played out, and you may have a laugh at our expense. Meanwhile, breakfast. (BEAUMARCHAIS *rings the bell.* *An* ATTENDANT *brings the chocolate.* BEAUMARCHAIS *takes a cup, and walks in the adjoining gallery, examining the pictures.*)

CLAVIGO. Air! air! I have been surprised and seized like a boy. Where are you then, Clavigo? How will you end this? How can you end it? Frightful position, into which your folly, your treachery has plunged you! (*He seizes his sword on the table.*) Ha! short and good! (*Lays it down.*) And is there no way, no means, but death? — or murder? — horrible murder! To deprive the hapless lady of her last solace, her only stay, her brother! To see gushing out the blood of a noble, brave man! And to draw upon yourself the double, insupportable curse of a ruined family! O, this was not the prospect when this amiable creature, even from your first meeting, attracted you with so many winsome ways! And when you abandoned her, did you not see the frightful consequences of your crime? What blessedness awaited you in her arms! in the friendship of such a brother! Marie! Marie! O that you could forgive! that at your feet I could atone for all by my tears! —

And why not? — My heart overflows; my soul mounts up in hope! Sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. What is your determination?

CLAVIGO. Hear me! My deceit toward your sister is unpardonable. Vanity has misled me. I feared by this marriage to ruin all my plans, all my projects for a world-wide celebrity. Could I have known that she had such a brother she would have been in my eyes no unimportant stranger; I should have expected from our union very considerable advantages. You inspire me, sir, with the highest esteem, and, in making me so keenly sensible of my errors, you impart to me a desire, a power, to make all good again. I throw myself at your feet! Help! help, if it is possible, to efface my guilt and put an end to unhappiness. Give your sister to me, again, sir, give me to her! How happy were I to receive from your hand a wife and the forgiveness of all my faults!

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is too late! My sister loves you no more, and I detest you. Write the desired declaration, that is all that I exact from you, and leave me to provide for a choice revenge.

CLAVIGO. Your obstinacy is neither right nor prudent. I grant you that it does not depend on me, whether I will make good again so irremediable an evil. Whether I can make it good? That rests with the heart of your excellent sister, whether she may again look upon a wretch who does not deserve to see the light of day. Only it is your duty to ascertain that and to conduct yourself accordingly, if your demeanour is not to resemble the inconsiderate passion of a young man. If Donna Maria is immovable. O, I know her heart! O, her good, heavenly soul hovers before me quite vividly! If she is inexorable, then it is time, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I insist on the vindication.

CLAVIGO. (*approaching the table*) And if I seize the sword?

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*advancing*) Good, sir! Excellent, sir!

CLAVIGO. (*holding him back*) One word more! You have the better case: let me have prudence for you. Consider what you are doing. Whether you or I fall, we are irrecoverably lost. Should I not die of pain, of remorse, if your blood were to stain my sword, if I, to complete her wretchedness, bereft her of her brother; and on the other hand — the murderer of Clavigo would not recross the Pyrenees.

BEAUMARCHAIS. The vindication, sir, the vindication!

CLAVIGO. Well! be it so. I will do all to convince you of the upright feeling with which your presence inspires me. I will write the vindication, I will write it at your dictation. Only promise me not to make use of it till I am able to convince Donna Maria of the change and repentance of my heart; till I have spoken to her elder sister; till she has put in a good word for me with my beloved one. Not before, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I am going to Aranjuez.

CLAVIGO. Well, then, till your return, let the vindication remain in your portfolio; if I have not been forgiven, then let your vengeance have full swing. This proposal is just, fair, and prudent; and if you do not agree to it let us then play the game of life and death. And whichever of us two become the victim of his own rashness, you and your poor sister will suffer in any case.

BEAUMARCHAIS. It becomes you to pity those you have made wretched.

CLAVIGO. (*sitting down*) Are you satisfied?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Well, then, I yield the point. But not a moment longer. I shall come back from Aranjuez, shall ask, shall hear! And if they have not forgiven you, which is what I hope and desire, I am off directly with the paper to the printing-office.

CLAVIGO. (*sitting down*) How do you demand it?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir! in presence of your attendants.

CLAVIGO. Why?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Command only that they be present in the adjoining gallery. It shall not be said that I have constrained you.

CLAVIGO. What scruples!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I am in Spain and have to deal with you.

CLAVIGO. Now then! (*Rings. A* SERVANT.) Call my attendants together, and betake yourselves to the gallery there. (*The* SERVANT *retires. The rest come and occupy the gallery.*) You allow me to write the vindication?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No, sir! Write it, I must beg of you, write it as I dictate it to you. (CLAVIGO *writes.*) "I, the undersigned, Joseph Clavigo, Recorder of the King" —

CLAVIGO. "Of the King."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "Acknowledge that after I was received into the family of Madame Guilbert as a friend" —

CLAVIGO. "As a friend."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "I made her sister, Mademoiselle de Beaumarchais, a promise of marriage, repeated many times, which I have unscrupulously broken." Have you got it down?

CLAVIGO. But, sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Have you another expression for it?

CLAVIGO. I should think —

BEAUMARCHAIS. "Unscrupulously broken." What you have done you need not hesitate to write. — "I have abandoned her, without any fault or weakness on her part having suggested a pretext or an excuse for this perfidy."

CLAVIGO. Well!

BEAUMARCHAIS. "On the contrary, the demeanour of the lady has been always pure, blameless, and worthy of all honour."

CLAVIGO. "Worthy of all honour."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "I confess that, through my deceit, the levity of my conversations, the construction of which they were susceptible, I have publicly humiliated this virtuous lady; and on this account I entreat her forgiveness, although I do not regard myself as worthy of receiving it." (CLAVIGO *stops.*) Write! write! "And this testimony of my own free will, and unforced, I have given, with this especial promise, that if this satisfaction should not please the injured lady, I am ready to afford it in every other way required. Madrid."

CLAVIGO. (*rises, beckons to the servants to withdraw, and hands him the paper*) I have to do with an injured, but a noble man. You will keep your word, and put off your vengeance. Only on this consideration, in this hope, I have granted you the shameful document, to which nothing else would have reduced me. But before I venture to appear before Donna Maria, I have resolved to engage some one to put in a word for me, to speak in my behalf — and you are the man.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do not reckon on that.

CLAVIGO. At least make her aware of the bitter, heartfelt repentance which you have seen in me. That is all, all, that I beg of you; do not deny me this; I should have to choose another less powerful intercessor, and even you owe her anyhow a faithful account. Do tell her how you have found me!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Well! this I can do, this I shall do. Good-bye, then.

CLAVIGO. Farewell! (*He wishes to take his hand;* BEAUMARCHAIS *draws it back.*)

CLAVIGO. (*alone*) So unexpectedly from one position into the other. It is an infatuation, a dream! —

I should not have given this vindication. — It came so quickly, so suddenly, like a thunder-storm!

CARLOS *enters.*

CARLOS. What visit is this you have had? The whole house is astir. What is the matter?

CLAVIGO. Marie's brother.

CARLOS. I suspected it. This old dog of a servant, who was formerly with Guilbert, and who at present acts the spy for me, knew yesterday that he was expected, and found me only this moment. He was here then?

CLAVIGO. An excellent young man.

CARLOS. Of whom we shall soon be rid. Already I have spread nets on his way! — What, then, was the matter? A challenge? An apology? Was he very hot, the fellow?

CLAVIGO. He demanded a declaration that his sister gave me no occasion for the change in my feelings toward her.

CARLOS. And have you granted it?

CLAVIGO. I thought it was best.

CARLOS. Well, very well! Was that all?

CLAVIGO. He insisted on a duel or the vindication.

CARLOS. The latter was the more judicious. Who will risk his life for a boy so romantic? And did he exact the paper with violence?

CLAVIGO. He dictated it to me, and I had to call the servants into the gallery.

CARLOS. I understand! ah! now I have you, little master! That will prove his ruin. Call me a scrivener if in two days I have not the varlet in prison and off for India by the next transport.

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos. The matter stands otherwise than as you think.

CARLOS. What?

CLAVIGO. I hope through his intervention, through my earnest endeavours, to obtain forgiveness from the unhappy girl.

CARLOS. Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. I hope to efface all the past, to heal the breach, and so in my own eyes and in the eyes of the world again to become an honourable man.

CARLOS. The devil! Have you become childish? One can still detect the bookworm in you. — To let yourself be so befooled! Do you not see that that is a stupidly laid plan to entrap you?

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos, he does not wish marriage; they are even opposed to it; she will not listen to aught from me.

CARLOS. That is the very point. No, my good friend, take it not ill; I may, perhaps, in plays have seen a country squire thus cheated.

CLAVIGO. You pain me. I beg you will reserve your humour for my wedding. I have resolved to marry Marie, of my own accord, from the impulse of my heart. All my hope, all my felicity, rests on the thought of procuring her forgiveness. And then away, Pride! Heaven still lies, as before, in the breast of this loved one. All the fame which I acquire, all the greatness to which I rise, will fill me with double joy, for it is shared by the lady who makes me twice a man. Farewell! I must hence. I must at least speak with Guilbert.

CARLOS. Wait only till after dinner.

CLAVIGO. Not a moment. [*Exit.*

CARLOS. (*looking after him in silence for some time*) There, some one is going to burn his fingers again!

ACT III.

SCENE I. — GUILBERT'S *abode.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE, BEAUMARCHAIS.

MARIE. You have seen him? All my limbs tremble! You have seen him? I had almost fainted when I heard he was come; and you have seen him? No, I can — I will — no — I can never see him again.

SOPHIE. I was beside myself when he stepped in. For ah! did not I love him as you did, with the fullest, purest, most sisterly love? Has not his estrangement grieved, tortured me? And now, the returning, the repentant one, at my feet! Sister, there is something so charming in his look, in the tone of his voice. He —

MARIE. Never, never more!

SOPHIE. He is the same as ever; has still that good, soft, feeling heart; still even that impetuosity of passion. There is still even the desire to be loved, and the excruciatingly painful torture when love is denied him. All! all! and of thee he speaks, Marie! as in those happy days of the most ardent passion. It is as if your good genius had even brought about this interval of infidelity and separation to break the uniformity and tediousness of a prolonged attachment, and impart to the feeling a fresh vivacity.

MARIE. Do you speak a word for him?

SOPHIE. No, sister. Nor have I promised to do so. Only, dearest, I see things as they are. You and your brother see them in a light far too romantic. You have this experience in common with many a very good girl, that your lover became faithless and forsook you. And that he comes again penitent, will amend

his fault, revive all old hopes — that is a happiness which another would not lightly reject.

MARIE. My heart would break!

SOPHIE. I believe you. The first moment must make a sensible impression on you — and then, my dear, I beseech you, regard not this anxiety, this embarrassment, which seems to overpower all your senses, as a result of hatred and ill-will. Your heart speaks more for him than you suppose, and even on that account you do not trust yourself to see him, because you so anxiously desire his return.

MARIE. Spare me, dearest!

SOPHIE. You should be happy. Did I feel that you despise him, that he is indifferent to you, I would not say another word, he should see my face no more. Yet, as it is, my love, you will thank me that I have helped you to overcome this painful irresolution, which is a token of the deepest love.

GUILBERT, BUENCO.

SOPHIE. Come, Buenco! Guilbert, come! Help me to give this darling courage, resolution, now while we may.

BUENCO. Would that I dared say — receive him again.

SOPHIE. Buenco!

BUENCO. The thought makes my blood boil — that he should still possess this angel, whom he has so shamefully injured, whom he has dragged to the grave. He — possess her? Why? How does he repair all that he has violated? He returns; once more it pleases him to return and say: "Now I may; now I will," just as if this excellent creature were suspected wares, which in the end you toss to the buyer after he has tormented you to the marrow by the meanest offers, and haggling like a Jew. No, my

voice he will never obtain, not even if the heart of Marie herself should speak for him. To return; and why, then, now? — now? — Must he wait till a valiant brother come, whose vengeance he must fear, and, like a schoolboy, come and crave pardon? Ha! he is as cowardly as he is worthless.

GUILBERT. You speak like a Spaniard, and as if you did not know Spaniards. This moment we are in greater danger than any of you perceive.

MARIE. Good Guilbert!

GUILBERT. I honour our brother's bold soul. In silence I have observed his heroic conduct. That all may turn out well, I wish that Marie could resolve to give Clavigo her hand; for — (*smiling*) — her heart he has still.

MARIE. You are cruel.

SOPHIE. Listen to him, I beseech you, listen to him!

GUILBERT. Your brother has wrung from him a declaration which will vindicate you in the eyes of the world and ruin us.

BUENCO. What!

MARIE. O God!

GUILBERT. He gave it in the hope of touching your heart. If you remain unmoved, then he must with might and main destroy the paper. This he can do; this he will do. Your brother will print and publish it immediately after his return from Aranjuez. I fear, if you persist, he will not return.

SOPHIE. My dear Guilbert!

MARIE. It is killing me!

GUILBERT. Clavigo cannot let the paper be published. If you reject his offer, and he is a man of honour, he goes to meet your brother, and one of them falls; and whether your brother perish or triumph he is lost. A stranger in Spain! The murderer of this beloved courtier! My sister, it is all very well to think and feel nobly, but to ruin yourself and yours —

MARIE. Advise me, Sophie; help me!

GUILBERT. And Buenco, contradict me, if you can.

BUENCO. He dares not; he fears for his life; otherwise he would not have written at all; he would not have offered Marie his hand.

GUILBERT. So much the worse. He will get a hundred to lend him their arm; a hundred to take away our brother's life on the way. Ha! Buenco, are you then so young? Should not a courtier have assassins in his pay?

BUENCO. The king is great and good.

GUILBERT. Go, then, traverse the walls which surround him, the guards, the ceremonial, and all that his courtiers have put between his people and him; press through and save us. Who comes?

CLAVIGO *appears.*

CLAVIGO. I must! I must! (MARIE *utters a shriek, and falls into* SOPHIE'S *arms.*)

SOPHIE. Cruel man, in what a position you place us! (GUILBERT *and* BUENCO *draw near to her.*)

CLAVIGO. Yes, it is she! it is she! and I am Clavigo! Listen to me, gentle Marie, if you will not look on me. At the time that Guilbert received me as a friend into his house, when I was a poor unknown youth, and when in my heart I felt for you an overpowering passion, was that any merit in me? or was it not rather an inner harmony of characters, a secret union of soul, so that you neither could remain unmoved by me, and I could flatter myself with the sole possession of this heart? And now — am I not even the same? Are you not even the same? Why should I not venture to hope? Why not entreat? Would you not once more take to your bosom a friend, a lover, whom you had long believed lost, if after a perilous, hapless voyage he returned

unexpectedly and laid his preserved life at your feet? And have I not also tossed upon a raging sea? Are not our passions, with which we live in perpetual strife, more terrible and indomitable than those waves which drive the unfortunate far from his fatherland? Marie! Marie! How can you hate me when I have never ceased to love you? Amid all infatuation, and in the very lap of all the enchanting seductions of vanity and pride, I have ever remembered those happy days of liberty, which I spent at your feet in sweet retirement, as we saw lie before us a succession of blooming prospects. And now why would you not realise with me all that we hoped? Will you now not enjoy the happiness of life because a gloomy interval has deferred our hopes? No, my love, believe that the best friends in the world are not quite pure; the highest joy is also interrupted through our passions, through fate. Shall we complain that it has happened to us as to all others, and shall we chastise ourselves in casting away this opportunity of repairing the past, of consoling a ruined family, of rewarding the heroic deed of a noble brother, and of establishing our own happiness for ever? My friends! from whom I deserve nothing; my friends, who must be so, because they are the friends of virtue, to which I return, unite your entreaties with mine. Marie! (*He falls on his knees.*) Marie! Do you no longer recognise my voice? Do you no more feel the pulse of my heart? Is it so? Marie! Marie!

MARIE. O Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. (*leaps up and kisses her hand with transport*) She forgives me! She loves me! (*He embraces* GUILBERT *and* BUENCO.) She loves me still! O Marie, my heart told me so! I might have thrown myself at your feet silently, uttered with tears my anguish, my penitence; without words you would have understood me, as I without words receive my

forgiveness. No, this intimate union of our souls is not destroyed; no, still they understand each other as in the olden time, in which no sound, no sign, was needful to impart our deepest emotions. Marie! Marie! Marie!

BEAUMARCHAIS *advances.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Ha!

CLAVIGO. (*rushing toward him*) My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do you forgive him?

MARIE. No more, no more! my senses abandon me. (*They lead her away.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Has she forgiven him?

BUENCO. It seems so.

BEAUMARCHAIS. You do not deserve your happiness.

CLAVIGO. I feel it, believe me.

SOPHIE. (*returns*) She forgives him. A stream of tears broke from her eyes. Let him withdraw, said she, sobbing, till I recover! I forgive him. "Ah, my sister!" she exclaimed, and fell upon my neck, "whereby knows he that I love him so?"

CLAVIGO. (*kissing her hand*) I am the happiest man under the sun. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*embraces him*) With all my heart then. Although I must tell you: even yet I cannot be your friend, even yet I cannot love you. So now you are one of us, and let all be forgotten. The paper you gave me — here it is. (*He takes it from his portfolio, tears it, and gives it to him.*)

CLAVIGO. I am yours, ever yours.

SOPHIE. I beseech you to retire, that she may not hear your voice, that she may rest.

CLAVIGO. (*embracing them in turn*) Farewell! Farewell! A thousand kisses to the angel. [*Exit.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. After all, it may be for the best, although I should have preferred it otherwise (*smiling*).

A girl is a good-natured creature, I must say — and, my friends, I should tell you, too, it was truly the thought, the wish of our ambassador, that Marie should forgive him, and that a happy marriage might end this vexatious business.

GUILBERT. I, too, am taking heart again.

BUENCO. He is your brother-in-law, and so, good-bye! You shall see me in your house no more.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir!

GUILBERT. Buenco!

BUENCO. I hate him, and shall hate him till the day of judgment. And look out with what kind of a man you have to deal. [*Exit.*

GUILBERT. He is a melancholy bird of ill-omen. But yet in time he will be persuaded, when he sees that all goes well.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Yet it was hasty to return him the paper.

GUILBERT. No more! no more! no visionary cares. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — CLAVIGO'S *abode.* CARLOS, *alone.*

CARLOS. It is praiseworthy to place under guardianship a man, who, by his dissipation or other follies, shows that his reason is deranged. If the magistrate does that, who otherwise does not much concern himself about us, why should not we do it for a friend? Clavigo, you are in a bad position; but there is still hope. And, provided that you retain a little of your former docility, there is time yet to keep you from a folly which, with your lively and sensitive character, will cause the misery of your life and lead you to an untimely grave. He comes.

CLAVIGO. *(thoughtful)* Good day, Carlos.

CARLOS. A very sad, dull . . . Good day! Is that the mood in which you come from your bride?

CLAVIGO. She is an angel. They are excellent people!

CARLOS. You will not so hasten with the wedding that we cannot get an embroidered dress for the occasion?

CLAVIGO. Jest or earnest, at our wedding no embroidered dresses will make a parade.

CARLOS. I believe it, indeed.

CLAVIGO. Pleasure in each other's society, friendly harmony, shall constitute the splendour of this festival.

CARLOS. You will have a quiet little wedding.

CLAVIGO. As those who feel that their happiness rests entirely with themselves.

CARLOS. In those circumstances it is very proper.

CLAVIGO. Circumstances! What do you mean by "those circumstances?"

CARLOS. As the matter now stands and remains.

CLAVIGO. Listen, Carlos, I cannot bear a tone of reserve between friends. I know you are not in favour of this marriage; notwithstanding, if you have aught to say against it, you may say it; come, out with it. How then does the matter stand? how goes it?

CARLOS. More things, unexpected, astonishing, happen to one in life, and it were not well if all went smoothly. Society would have nothing to wonder at, nothing to whisper in the ear, nothing to pull to pieces.

CLAVIGO. It will make some stir.

CARLOS. Clavigo's wedding! that is a matter of course. How many a girl in Madrid waits for thee to make her an offer, and if you now play them this trick?

CLAVIGO. That cannot be helped now.

CARLOS. 'Tis strange, I have known few men who make so great and general an impression on women as you. In all ranks there are good girls who occupy

their time with plans and projects to become yours. One relies on her beauty, another on her riches, another on her rank, another on her wit, and another on her connections. What compliments have been paid to me on your account! For, indeed, neither my flat nose, nor crisp hair, nor my known contempt for women can bring me such good luck.

CLAVIGO. You mock.

CARLOS. As if I have not already had in my hands declarations, offers, written with their own white fond little fingers, as badly spelt as an original love-letter of a girl can only be! How many pretty duennas have come under my thumb on this account!

CLAVIGO. And you did not say a word of all this?

CARLOS. I did not wish to trouble you with mere trifles, and I could not have advised you to take any matter seriously. O Clavigo, my heart has watched over your fate as over my own! I have no other friend but you; all men are not to be tolerated and you even begin to be unbearable.

CLAVIGO. I entreat you, be calm.

CARLOS. Burn the house of a man who has taken ten years to build it, and then send him a confessor to recommend Christian patience! A man ought to look out for no one but himself; people do not deserve —

CLAVIGO. Are your misanthropic visions returning?

CARLOS. If I harp anew on that string who is to blame but you? I said to myself: What would avail him at present the most advantageous marriage? him, who for an ordinary man has doubtless advanced far enough? But with his genius, with his gifts, it is not probable, it is not possible, that he can remain stationary. I concerted my plans. There are so few men at once so enterprising and so supple, so highly gifted and so diligent. He is well qualified in all departments. As Recorder, he can rapidly acquire the most impor-

tant knowledge; he will make himself necessary; and should a change take place, he becomes minister.

CLAVIGO. I avow it. Often, too, were these my dreams.

CARLOS. Dreams! As surely as I should succeed in reaching the top of a tower, if I set off with the firm determination not to yield till I had carried my point, so surely would you have overcome all obstacles; and afterward the rest would have given me no disquietude. You have no fortune from your family, so much the better! You would have become more zealous to acquire, more attentive to preserve. Besides, he who sits at the receipt of custom without enriching himself is a great fool; and I do not see why the country does not owe taxes to the minister as well as to the king. The latter gives his name, and the former the power. When I had arranged all that, I then sought out a fit match for you. I saw many a proud family which would have shut their eyes to your origin, many of the richest, who would have gladly supported the maintenance of your rank, to share the dignity of the second king — and now —

CLAVIGO. You are unjust, you lower my actual condition too much; and do you fancy then that I cannot rise higher, and advance still further?

CARLOS. My dear friend, if you lop off the heart of a young plant, in vain will it afterward and incessantly put forth countless shoots; it will form, perhaps, a large bush, but it is all over with the kingly attempt of its first growth. And think not that at the court this marriage is regarded with indifference. Have you forgotten what sort of men disapproved your attachment, your union with Marie? Have you forgotten who inspired you with the wise thought of abandoning her? Must I count them all on my fingers?

CLAVIGO. This thought has already distressed me; yes, few will approve this step.

CARLOS. Nobody; and will not your powerful friends be indignant that you, without asking their leave, without consulting them, should have hastily sacrificed yourself like a thoughtless child, who throws away his money in the market on worm-eaten nuts?

CLAVIGO. That is impolite, Carlos, and exaggerated.

CARLOS. Not at all. Let one commit an egregious error through passion, I allow it. To marry a chambermaid because she is as beautiful as an angel! Well, the man is blamed, and yet people envy him.

CLAVIGO. People, always the people!

CARLOS. You know I do not inquire very curiously after the success of others; but it is ever true that he who does nothing for others does nothing for himself; and if men do not wonder at or envy you you are not happy either.

CLAVIGO. The world judges by appearances. Oh! he who possesses Marie's heart is to be envied.

CARLOS. Things appear what they are; but, frankly, I have always thought that there were hidden qualities that render your happiness enviable; for what one sees with his eyes and can comprehend with his understanding —

CLAVIGO. You wish to make me desperate.

CARLOS. "How has that happened?" they will ask in the town. "How has that happened?" they will ask at court. "But, good God! how has that happened? She is poor, without position. If Clavigo had not had an intrigue with her one would not have known that she is in the world; she is said to be well-bred, agreeable, witty!" But who takes to himself a wife for that? That passes away in the first years of marriage. "Ah!" says some one, "she must be beautiful, charmingly, ravishingly beautiful." "That explains the matter," says another.

CLAVIGO. (*troubled, lets a deep sigh escape*) Alas!

CARLOS. "Beautiful? Oh," says one lady, "very

good! I have not seen her for six years." "She may well be altered," says another. "One must, however, see her, he will soon bring her forth," says a third. People ask, look, are eager, wait, and are impatient; they recall the ever-proud Clavigo, who never let himself be seen in public without leading out in triumph some stately, splendid, haughty Spaniard lady, whose full bosom, blooming cheeks, impassioned eyes — all, all, seemed to ask the world encircling her: "Am not I worthy of my companion?" and who in her pride lets flaunt so widely in the breeze the train of her silken robe, to render her appearance more imposing and remarkable. And now appears the gentleman — and surprise renders the people dumb — he comes accompanied by his tripping little Frenchwoman, whose hollow eyes, whose whole appearance announces consumption, in spite of the red and white with which she has daubed her death-pale countenance. Yes, brother! I become frantic, I run away, when people stop me now and ask, and question, and say they cannot understand —

CLAVIGO. (*seizing his hand*) My friend, my brother, I am in a frightful position. I tell you, I avow, I was horror-struck when I saw Marie again. How changed she is! — how pale and exhausted! Oh! it is my fault, my treacheries!" —

CARLOS. Follies! visions! She was in consumption when the romance of your love was still unfolding. I told you a thousand times, and . . . But you lovers have your eyes, nay, all your senses closed. Clavigo, it is a shame. All, yes, all to forget thus! A sick wife, who will plague all your posterity, so that all your children and grandchildren will in a few years be politely extinguished, like the sorry lamp of a beggar. A man who could have been the founder of a family, which perhaps in future . . . Ah! I shall yet turn crazy, my reason fails me.

CLAVIGO. Carlos, what shall I say to thee? When I saw her again, in the first transport, my heart went out toward her; and alas! when that was gone, compassion — a deep, heartfelt pity was breathed into me: but love . . . Lo! in the warm fulness of joy, I seemed to feel on my neck the cold hand of death. I strove to be cheerful; to play the part of a happy man again, in presence of those who surrounded me: it was all gone, all so stiff, so painfully anxious! Had they not somewhat lost their self-possession they would have remarked it.

CARLOS. Hell! death and devil! and you are going to marry her! (CLAVIGO *remains absorbed, without giving any answer.*) It is all over with thee; lost for ever. Farewell, brother, and let me forget all; let me, all the rest of my solitary life, furiously curse your fatal blindness. Ah! to sacrifice all, to render oneself despicable in the eyes of the world, and not even then satisfy thereby a passion, a desire! To contract a malady voluntarily, which, while undermining your inmost strength, will make you hideous in the eyes of men!

CLAVIGO. Carlos! Carlos!

CARLOS. Would that you had never been elevated, at least you would never have fallen! With what eyes will they look on all this! "There is the brother," they will say; "he must be a lad of spirit; he has put to the last shift Clavigo, who dared not draw the sword." "Ah!" our flaunting courtiers will say, "'Twas to be seen all along that he was not a gentleman." "Ah, ah!" exclaims another, while drawing his hat over his eyes, "the Frenchman should have come to me!" And he claps himself on the paunch — a fellow, who, perhaps, were not worthy of being your groom!

CLAVIGO. (*expresses the most acute distress, and falls into the arms of* CARLOS *amid a torrent of tears*)

Save me! My friend! my best friend, save me! Save me from a double perjury! from an unutterable disgrace, from myself. I am undone!

CARLOS. Poor hapless fellow! I hoped that these youthful furies, these stormy tears, this absorbing melancholy would have been gone; I hoped to behold you, as a man, agitated no more, no more plunged in that overwhelming sorrow, which in other days you so often uttered on my breast with tears. Be a man, Clavigo, quit yourself like a man!

CLAVIGO. Let me weep! (*Throws himself into a chair.*)

CARLOS. Alas for you, that you have entered on a career which you will not pursue to the end! With your heart, with your sentiments, which would make a tranquil citizen happy, you must unite this unhappy hankering after greatness! And what is greatness, Clavigo? To raise oneself above others in rank and consequence? Believe it not. If your heart is not greater than that of others; if you are not able to place yourself calmly above the circumstances which would embarrass an ordinary man, then with all your ribbons, all your stars, even with the crown itself, you are but an ordinary man. Take heart, compose your mind! (CLAVIGO *rises, looks on* CARLOS, *and holds out his hand, which* CARLOS *eagerly seizes.*) Come, come, my friend! make up your mind. Look, I will put everything aside, and will say to you: Here lie two proposals on equal scales; either you marry Marie and find your happiness in a quiet citizen-like life, in tranquil homely joys; or you bend your steps along the path of honour to a near goal. — I will put all aside, and say: The beam of the balance is in equilibrium; your decision will settle which of the two scales will carry the day! Good! But decide! There is nothing in the world so pitiable as an undecided man, who wavers between two feelings, hoping to reconcile them,

and does not understand that nothing can unite them except the doubt, the disquietude, which rack him. Go, and give Marie your hand, act as an honourable man, who, to keep his word, sacrifices the happiness of his life, who regards it a duty to repair the wrong he has committed; but who, on the other hand, has never extended the sphere of his passions and activity further than to be in a position to repair the wrong he has committed; and thus enjoy the happiness of a tranquil retirement, the approval of a peaceful conscience, and all the blessedness belonging to those who are able to create their own happiness and provide the joy of their families. Decide, and then shall I say — You are every inch a man.

CLAVIGO. Carlos! Oh, for a spark of your strength — of your courage!

CARLOS. It slumbers in thee, and I will blow till it burst forth into flames. Behold on the one side the fortune and the greatness which await you. I shall not set off this future with the variegated hues of poetry; represent it to yourself with such vivacity as it clearly appeared before your mind till the hot-headed Frenchman made you lose your wits. But there, too, Clavigo, be a man thoroughly, and take your way straight, without looking to the right or left. May your soul expand, and this great idea become deeply rooted there, that extraordinary men are extraordinary, precisely because their duties differ from the duties of ordinary men; that he, whose task it is to watch over, to govern, to preserve a great whole, needs not reproach himself with having overlooked trifling circumstances, with having sacrificed small matters to the good of the whole. Thus acts the Creator in nature, and the king in the state; why should not we do the same, in order to resemble them?

CLAVIGO. Carlos, I am a little man.

CARLOS. We are not little when circumstances trouble us, only when they overpower us. Yet another breath, and you are yourself again. Cast away the remnant of a pitiable passion, which in these days as little becomes you as the little gray jacket and modest mien with which you arrived at Madrid. What the poor girl has done for you, you have long ago returned; and that your first friendly reception was from her hands. Oh, another would, for the pleasure of your acquaintance, have done as much and more, without putting forth such pretensions . . . and would you take it into your head to give your schoolmaster the half of your fortune because he taught you the alphabet, thirty years ago? What say you, Clavigo?

CLAVIGO. That is all very well. On the whole you may be right, it may be so; only how are we to get out of the embarrassment in which we stick fast? Advise me there, help me there, and then lecture.

CARLOS. All right! You are, then, resolved.

CLAVIGO. Give me the power and I shall exert it. I am not able to think; think for me.

CARLOS. Thus then. First you will go and meet this person, and then you will demand, sword in hand, the vindication which you inconsiderately and involuntarily gave.

CLAVIGO. I have it already; he tore it and returned it to me.

CARLOS. Excellent! excellent! That step taken already — and you have let me speak so long? — Your course is so much the shorter! Write him quite coolly: "You find it inconvenient to marry his sister; the reason he can learn if he will repair to-night to a certain place, attended by a friend, and armed with any weapons he likes." And then follows the signature. Come, Clavigo, write that; I shall be your second — and the devil is in it if — (CLAVIGO *approaches the table.*) Listen! A word! If I think

aright of it, it is an extravagant proposal. Who are we to risk our lives with a mad adventurer? Besides, the man's conduct, his standing, do not deserve that we regard him as an equal. Listen, then! Now if I were to bring forward a criminal charge against him, that he arrived secretly at Madrid, got himself announced under a pseudonym with an accomplice, at first gained your confidence with friendly words, and thereafter fell upon you all of a sudden, forcibly obtained a declaration, and afterward went off to spread it abroad — that will prove his ruin: he shall learn what it means — to invade the tranquillity of a Spaniard under his own roof.

CLAVIGO. You are right.

CARLOS. But till the lawsuit has begun, in which interval the gentleman might play all sorts of tricks, if now we could meanwhile play a dead-sure game, and seize him tight by the head.

CLAVIGO. I understand, and know you are the man to carry it out.

CARLOS. Ah! well! if I, who have been at it for five and twenty years, and have witnessed tears of anguish trickling down the cheeks of the foremost men, if I cannot unravel such child's play! So then, give me full power; you need do nothing, write nothing. He who orders the imprisonment of the brother pantomimically intimates that he will have nothing to do with the sister.

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos! Let it go as it may, I cannot, I will not suffer that. Beaumarchais is a worthy man, and he shall not languish in an ignominious prison on account of his righteous cause. Another plan, Carlos, another!

CARLOS. Bah! bah! Stuff and nonsense! We will not devour him. He will be well lodged and well cared for, and thereafter he cannot hold out long: for, observe, when he perceives that we are in earnest,

all his theatrical rage will cease; he will come to terms, return smarting to France, and be only too thankful, if we secure a yearly pension for his sister — perhaps the only thing he had in view.

CLAVIGO. So be it then! Only let him be kindly dealt with.

CARLOS. Leave that to me. — One precaution more! We cannot know but that it may be blabbed out — that the thing may get wind, and then he gets over you, and all is lost. Therefore, leave your house, so that not even your servants know where you have gone. Take with you only absolute necessaries. I shall despatch you a fellow, who will conduct you and bring you to a place where the holy Hermandad herself will not find you. I have always in readiness a few of these mouse-holes. Adieu!

CLAVIGO. Good-bye!

CARLOS. Cheer up! cheerily! When it is all over, brother, we will enjoy ourselves. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — GUILBERT'S *abode.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE BEAUMARCHAIS *at work.*

MARIE. With such violence did Buenco depart?

SOPHIE. It was natural. He loves you, and how could he endure the sight of the man whom he must doubly hate?

MARIE. He is the best, most upright citizen I have ever known. (*Showing her work to her sister.*) It seems to me I must do it thus. I shall take in that and turn the end up. That will do nicely.

SOPHIE. Very well. And I am going to put a straw-coloured ribbon on my bonnet; it becomes me best. Do you smile?

MARIE. I am laughing at myself. We girls are a queer set of people, I must say: hardly are our spirits but a little raised when straightway we are busy with finery and ribbons.

SOPHIE. You cannot well apply that to yourself; from the moment Clavigo forsook you, nothing could give you the least pleasure. (MARIE *starts up and looks toward the door.*) What is the matter?

MARIE. (*anxious*) I thought I heard some one come in! My poor heart! O, it will destroy me yet! Feel how it beats with that groundless terror!

SOPHIE. You look pale. Be calm, I beseech you, my love!

MARIE. (*pointing to her chest*) I feel here an oppression — a sudden pain. It will kill me.

SOPHIE. Be careful.

MARIE. I am a foolish, hapless girl. Pain and joy with all their force have undermined my poor life. I tell you 'tis but half a joy that I have him again. Little shall I enjoy the happiness that awaits me in his arms; perhaps not at all.

SOPHIE. My sister, my only love! You are wearing yourself out with these visions.

MARIE. Why shall I deceive myself?

SOPHIE. You are young and happy, and can hope for all.

MARIE. Hope! O, the only sweet balm of life! How often it charms my soul! Happy youthful dreams hover before me and accompany the beloved form of the peerless one, who now is mine again. O Sophie, he is so winsome! Whilst I saw him not, he has — I know not how I shall express it; — all the qualities which in former days lay hid in him through his diffidence have unfolded themselves. He has become a man, and must with this pure feeling of his, with which he advances, that is so entirely devoid of pride and vanity — he must captivate all hearts. —

And he shall be mine? No, my sister, I was not worthy of him — and now I am much less so!

SOPHIE. Take him, however, and be happy. I hear your brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS *enters.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Where is Guilbert?

SOPHIE. He has been gone some time; he cannot be much longer.

MARIE. What is the matter, brother? (*Springing up and falling on his neck.*) Dear brother, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Nothing, nothing at all, my Marie!

MARIE. If I am thy Marie, do tell me what is on thy mind!

SOPHIE. Let him be. Men often look vexed without having aught particular on their mind!

MARIE. No, no. I have seen thy face only a little while, but already I read all thy thoughts; all the feelings of thy pure and sincere soul are stamped on thy brow. There is somewhat which makes thee anxious. Speak, what is it?

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is nothing, my love. I hope that at bottom it is nothing. Clavigo —

MARIE. How?

BEAUMARCHAIS. I was at Clavigo's house. He is not at home.

SOPHIE. And does that perplex you?

BEAUMARCHAIS. His porter says he has gone he knows not where; no one knows how long. If he should be hiding himself! If he be really gone! Whither? for what reason?

MARIE. We will wait.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thy tongue lies. Ah! the paleness of thy cheeks, the trembling of thy limbs, all speaks and testifies that thou canst not wait. Dear

sister! (*Clasps her in his arms.*) On this beating, painfully trembling heart I vow, — hear me, O God, who art righteous! hear me, all His saints! — thou shalt be avenged if he — my senses abandon me at the thought — if he fail, if he make himself guilty of a frightful, double perjury; if he mock at our misery . . . No, it is, it is not possible, not possible — Thou shalt be avenged.

SOPHIE. All too soon, too precipitate. Be careful of her health, I beseech you, my brother. (MARIE *sits down.*) What ails thee? You are fainting.

MARIE. No, no. You are so anxious.

SOPHIE. (*gives her water*) Take this glass.

MARIE. No, no! what avails that? Well, for my own sake, give it me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Where is Guilbert? Where is Buenco? Send for them, I entreat you. (SOPHIE *exit.*) How dost thou feel, Marie?

MARIE. Well, quite well! Think'st thou then, brother —

BEAUMARCHAIS. What, my love?

MARIE. Ah!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Is your breathing painful?

MARIE. The disordered beating of my heart oppresses me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Have you then no remedy? Do you use no anodyne?

MARIE. I know of only one remedy, and for that I have prayed to God many a time and oft.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thou shalt have it, and I hope from my hand.

MARIE. That will do well.

SOPHIE *enters.*

SOPHIE. A courier has just brought this letter; he comes from Aranjuez.

BEAUMARCHAIS. That is the seal and the hand of our ambassador.

SOPHIE. I bade him dismount and take some refreshment; he would not, because he had yet more dispatches.

MARIE. Will you, my love, send the servant for the physician?

SOPHIE. Are you ill? Holy God! what ails thee?

MARIE. You will make me so anxious that at last I shall scarcely dare ask for a glass of water. . . . Sophie! Brother! — What is in the letter? See, how he trembles! how all courage leaves him!

SOPHIE. Brother, my brother! (BEAUMARCHAIS *throws himself speechless into a chair and lets the letter fall.*) My brother! (*Lifts up the letter and reads it.*)

MARIE. Let me see it! I must — (*tries to rise*). Alas! I feel it. It is the last. Oh, sister, spare not, for mercy's sake, the last quick death-stroke! — He betrays us!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*springing up*) He betrays us! (*Beating on his brow and breast.*) Here! here! All is as dumb, as dead before my soul, as if a thunderclap had disordered my senses. Marie! Marie! thou art betrayed! — and I stand here! Whither? — What? — I see nothing, nothing! no way, no safety! (*Throws himself into a seat.*)

GUILBERT *enters.*

SOPHIE. Guilbert! Counsel! Help! We are lost!

GUILBERT. My wife!

SOPHIE. Read! read! The ambassador makes known to our brother: that Clavigo has made a criminal complaint against him, under the pretext that he introduced himself into his house under a false name; and that, taking him by surprise in bed and presenting

a pistol, he compelled him to sign a disgraceful vindication; and if he do not quickly withdraw from the kingdom they will get him thrown into prison, from which the ambassador himself, perhaps, will not be able to deliver him.

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*springing up*) Indeed, they shall do so! they shall do so! shall get me imprisoned; but from his corpse, from the place where I shall have glutted my vengeance with his blood. Ah! the stern, frightful thirst after his blood fills my whole soul. Thanks to Thee, God in heaven, that Thou vouchsafest to man, amid burning, insupportable wrongs, a solace, a refreshment! What a thirst for vengeance I feel in my breast! how the glorious feeling, the lust for his blood, raises me out of my utter dejection, out of my sluggish indecision; raises me above myself! Vengeance! How I rejoice in it! how all within me strives after him, to seize him, to destroy him.

SOPHIE. Thou art terrible, brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. So much the better. — Ah! No sword, no weapon! with these hands will I strangle him, that the triumph may be mine! all my own the feeling: I have destroyed him!

MARIE. My heart! my heart!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I have not been able to save thee, so thou shalt be avenged. I pant after his footsteps, my teeth lust after his flesh, my gums after his blood. Have I become a frantic wild beast? There burns in every vein, there glows in every nerve, the desire after him, after him! — I could hate for ever, who should make away with him by poison, who should rid me of him by assassination. Oh, help me, Guilbert, to seek him out. Where is Buenco? Help me to find him!

GUILBERT. Save yourself! save yourself! you have lost your reason.

MARIE. Flee, my brother!

SOPHIE. Take him away; he will cause his sister's death.

BUENCO *appears.*

BUENCO. Up, sir! away! I foresaw it. I gave heed to all. And now they are in hot pursuit; you are lost if you do not leave the town this moment.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Never! where is Clavigo? —

BUENCO. I do not know.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thou knowest. I entreat you on my knees, tell me.

SOPHIE. For God's sake, Buenco!

MARIE. Ah! air! air! (*Falls back.*) Clavigo!

BUENCO. Help! she is dying!

SOPHIE Forsake us not, God in heaven; — hence, my brother, away!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*falls down before* MARIE, *who despite every aid does not recover*) To forsake thee! to forsake thee!

SOPHIE. Stay, then, and ruin us all, as you have killed Marie. You are gone, then, O my sister, through the heedlessness of your own brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Stop, sister!

SOPHIE. (*mocking*) Saviour! — Avenger! — help yourself!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do I deserve this?

SOPHIE. Give her to me again! And then go to the prison, to the stake; go, pour forth thy blood and give me her again.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sophie!

SOPHIE. Ha! she is gone; she is dead — save yourself for us! (*falling on his neck*) my brother, for us! for our father! Haste, haste! That was her fate! she has met it! And there is a God in heaven; to Him leave vengeance.

BUENCO. Hence! away! Come with me; I will hide you till we find means to get you out of the kingdom.

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*falls on* MARIE *and kisses her*) Sister dear! (*They tear him away, he clasps* SOPHIE, *she disengages herself. They remove* MARIE, *and* BUENCO *and* BEAUMARCHAIS *retire.*)

GUILBERT, *a* PHYSICIAN.

SOPHIE. (*returning from the room to which they had taken* MARIE) Too late! She is gone! she is dead!

GUILBERT. Come in, sir! See for yourself! It is not possible! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *The Street before the house of* GUILBERT. *Night.* (*The house is open, and before the door stands three men clad in black mantles, holding torches.* CLAVIGO *enters, wrapped in a cloak, his sword under his arm; a* SERVANT *goes before him with a torch.*)

CLAVIGO. I told you to avoid this street.

SERVANT. We must have gone a great way round, sir, and you are in such haste. It is not far hence where Don Carlos is lodged.

CLAVIGO. Torches there!

SERVANT. A funeral. Come on, sir.

CLAVIGO. Marie's abode! A funeral! A death-agony shudders through all my limbs! Go, ask whom they are going to bury.

SERVANT. (*to the men*) Whom are you going to bury?

THE MEN. Marie de Beaumarchais. (CLAVIGO *sits down on a stone and covers himself with a cloak.*)

SERVANT. (*comes back*) They are going to bury Marie de Beaumarchais.

CLAVIGO. (*springing up*) Must thou repeat it? Repeat that word of thunder which strikes all the marrow out of my bones?

SERVANT. Peace, sir! Come on, sir. Consider the danger by which you are surrounded.

CLAVIGO. To hell with thee, reptile! I remain.

SERVANT. O Carlos! O that I could find thee! — Carlos! — he has lost his reason. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — CLAVIGO. *The Mutes in the distance.*

CLAVIGO. Dead! Marie dead! Torches! her dismal attendants! It is a trick of enchantment, a night vision, that terrifies me; that holds up to me a mirror, in which I may see foreboded the end of all my treacheries. But there is still time. Still! — I tremble! — my heart melts with horror! No! no! thou shalt not die — I come, I come! Vanish, ye spirits of the night, who with your horrible terrors set yourselves in my way. (*He goes up to them.*) Vanish — they remain! Ha! they look round after me! Woe! woe is me! They are men like myself. It is true! true! Canst thou comprehend it? She is dead. It seizes me amid all the horrors of midnight — the feeling — she is dead. There she lies, the flower at your feet! and thou — O have mercy on me, God in heaven — I have not killed her! Hide yourselves, ye stars; look not down! Ye, who have so often beheld the villain, with feelings of the most heartfelt happiness, leave this threshold; through this very street float along in golden dreams, with music and song, and enrapture his maiden listening at the secret casement and lingering in transport. And now I fill the house with wailing and sorrow — and this scene of my bliss with the funeral song — Marie! Marie! take me with thee! take me with thee! (*Mournful music breathes forth a few sounds from within.*) They are setting out on the

way to the grave. Stop! stop! Shut not the coffin. Let me see her once more. (*He runs up to the house.*) Ha! into whose presence am I rushing? Whom to face in his terrible sorrow? Her friends! her brother! whose breast is panting with raving grief! (*The music recommences.*) She calls me! she calls me! I come! What anguish is this which overwhelms me? What shuddering withholds me?

[*The music begins for the third time and continues. The torches move before the door; three others come out to them, who range themselves in order to enclose the funeral procession, which now comes out of the house. Six bearers carry the bier, upon which lies the coffin, covered.*

SCENE III. — GUILBERT *and* BUENCO (*in deep mourning*).

CLAVIGO. (*coming forward*) Stay!

GUILBERT. What voice is that?

CLAVIGO. Stay! (*The bearers stop.*)

BUENCO. Who dares to interrupt the solemn funeral?

CLAVIGO. Set it down.

GUILBERT. Ha!

BUENCO. Wretch! are thy deeds of shame not yet ended? Is thy victim not safe from thee in the coffin?

CLAVIGO. No more! Make me not frantic. The wretched are dangerous; I must see her. (*He tears off the pall and the lid of the coffin.* MARIE *is seen lying within it, clad in white, her hands clasped before her;* CLAVIGO *steps back and covers his face.*)

BUENCO. Wilt thou awake her to murder her again?

CLAVIGO. Poor mocker! Marie! (*He falls down before the coffin.*)

SCENE IV. — *Enter* BEAUMARCHAIS. *The preceding.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Buenco has left me. They say she is not dead. I must see, spite of hell, I must see her. Ha! torches! a funeral! (*He runs hastily up to it, gazes on the coffin, and falls down speechless. They raise him up; he is as if deprived of sense;* GUILBERT *holds him.*)

CLAVIGO. (*who is standing on the other side of the coffin*) Marie! Marie!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*springing up*) That is his voice. Who calls Marie? At the sound of that voice what burning rage starts into my veins!

CLAVIGO. It is I. (BEAUMARCHAIS *staring wildly around and grasping his sword.* GUILBERT *holds him.*) I fear not thy blazing eyes, nor the point of thy sword. Oh! look here, here, on these closed eyes — these clasped hands!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Dost *thou* show *me* that sight? (*He tears himself loose, runs upon* CLAVIGO, *who instantly draws; they fight;* BEAUMARCHAIS *pierces him through the breast.*)

CLAVIGO. (*falling*) I thank thee, brother; thou marriest us. (*He falls upon the coffin.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*tearing him away*) Hence from this saint, thou fiend!

CLAVIGO. Alas! (*The bearers raise up his body and support him.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. His blood! Look up, Marie, look upon thy bridal ornaments, and then close thine eyes for ever. See how I have consecrated thy place of rest with the blood of thy murderer! Charming! Glorious!

SCENE V. — *Enter* SOPHIE. *The Preceding.*

SOPHIE. My brother? O my God, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Draw nearer, my love, and see! I hoped to have strewn her bridal bed with roses; see the roses with which I adorn her on her way to heaven!

SOPHIE. We are lost!

CLAVIGO. Save yourself, rash one! save yourself, ere the dawn of day. May God, who sent you for an avenger, conduct you! Sophie, forgive me. Brothers, friends, forgive me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. How the sight of his gushing blood extinguishes all the glowing vengeance within me! how with his departing life vanishes all my rage! (*Going up to him.*) Die, I forgive thee.

CLAVIGO. Your hand! and yours, Sophie! and yours! (BUENCO *hesitates.*)

SOPHIE. Give it him, Buenco.

CLAVIGO. I thank you; you are as good as ever; I thank you. And thou, O spirit of my beloved, if thou still hoverest around this place, look down, see these heavenly favours, bestow thy blessing, and do thou too forgive me. I come! I come! Save yourself, my brother. Tell me, did she forgive me? How did she die?

SOPHIE. Her last word was thy unhappy name. She departed without taking leave of us.

CLAVIGO. I will follow her and bear your farewells to her.

SCENE VI. — CARLOS, *a* SERVANT. *The Preceding.*

CARLOS. Clavigo! murderers!

CLAVIGO. Hear me, Carlos! Thou seest here the victim of thy prudence; and now, I conjure thee, for the sake of that blood, in which my life irrevocably flows away, save my brother.

CARLOS. O my friend! (*To the* SERVANT.) You standing there? Fly for a surgeon. [*Exit* SERVANT.

CLAVIGO. It is in vain; save, save my unhappy brother! thy hand thereon. They have forgiven me, and so forgive I thee. Accompany him to the frontiers, and — oh!

CARLOS. (*stamping with his feet*) Clavigo! Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. (*drawing nearer to the coffin, upon which they lay him down*) Marie! Thy hand! (*He unfolds her hands and grasps the right hand.*)

SOPHIE. (*to* BEAUMARCHAIS) Hence, unhappy one, away!

CLAVIGO. I have her hand, her cold, dead hand. Thou art mine. Yet this last bridal kiss! Alas!

SOPHIE. He is dying! Save thyself, brother! (BEAUMARCHAIS *falls on* SOPHIE'S *neck. She returns the embrace and makes a sign for him to withdraw.*)

Egmont

A Tragedy in Five Acts

Translated by Anna Swanwick

This tragedy was commenced in the year 1775, when Goethe was twenty-six years of age — but it was not finished until eleven years later. A rough draft of the whole was made in 1782, but it was only completed and finally re-written during Goethe's residence in Rome, in 1786.

Introduction to Egmont

In Schiller's critique upon the tragedy of Egmont, Goethe is censured for departing from the truth of history in the delineation of his hero's character, and also for misrepresenting the circumstances of his domestic life. The Egmont of history left behind him a numerous family, anxiety for whose welfare detained him in Brussels when most of his friends sought safety in flight. His withdrawal would have entailed the confiscation of his property, and he shrank from exposing to privation those whose happiness was dearer to him than life; — a consideration which he repeatedly urged in his conferences with the Prince of Orange, when the latter insisted upon the necessity of escape. We see here, not the victim of a blind and foolhardy confidence, as portrayed in Goethe's drama, but the husband and father, regardless of his personal safety in anxiety for the interests of his family.

I shall not inquire which conception is best suited for the purposes of art, but merely subjoin a few extracts from the same critique, in which Schiller does ample justice to Goethe's admirable delineation of the age and country in which the drama is cast, and which are peculiarly valuable from the pen of so competent an authority as the historian of the Fall of the Netherlands.

"Egmont's tragical death resulted from the relation in which he stood to the nation and the government; hence the action of the drama is intimately connected

with the political life of the period — an exhibition of which forms its indispensable groundwork. But if we consider what an infinite number of minute circumstances must concur in order to exhibit the spirit of an age, and the political condition of a people, and the art required to combine so many isolated features into an intelligible and organic whole; and if we contemplate, moreover, the peculiar character of the Netherlands, consisting not of one nation, but of an aggregate of many smaller states, separated from each other by the sharpest contrasts, we shall not cease to wonder at the creative genius, which, triumphing over all these difficulties, conjures up before us, as with an enchanter's wand, the Netherlands of the sixteenth century.

"Not only do we behold these men living and working before us, we dwell among them as their familiar associates; we see, on the other hand, the joyous sociability, the hospitality, the loquacity, the somewhat boastful temper of the people, their republican spirit, ready to boil up at the slightest innovation, and often subsiding again as rapidly on the most trivial grounds; and, on the other hand, we are made acquainted with the burdens under which they groaned, from the new mitres of the bishops, to the French psalms which they were forbidden to sing; — nothing is omitted, no feature introduced which does not bear the stamp of nature and of truth. Such delineation is not the result of premeditated effort, nor can it be commanded by art; it can only be achieved by the poet whose mind is thoroughly imbued with his subject; from him such traits escape unconsciously, and without design, as they do from the individuals whose characters they serve to portray.

"The few scenes in which the citizens of Brussels are introduced appear to us to be the result of profound study, and it would be difficult to find, in so

few words, a more admirable historical monument of the Netherlands of that period.

"Equally graphic is that portion of the picture which portrays the spirit of the government, though it must be confessed that the artist has here somewhat softened down the harsher features of the original. This is especially true in reference to the character of the Duchess of Parma. Before his Duke of Alva we tremble, without ever turning from him with aversion; he is a firm, rigid, inaccessible character; 'a brazen tower without gates, the garrison of which must be furnished with wings.' The prudent forecast with which he makes his arrangements for Egmont's arrest excites our admiration, while it removes him from our sympathy. The remaining characters of the drama are delineated with a few masterly strokes. The subtle, taciturn Orange, with his timid, yet comprehensive and all-combining mind, is depicted in a single scene. Both Alva and Egmont are mirrored in the men by whom they are surrounded. This mode of delineation is admirable. The poet, in order to concentrate the interest upon Egmont, has isolated his hero, and omitted all mention of Count Horn, who shared the same melancholy fate."

The Appendix to Schiller's "History of the Fall of the Netherlands" contains an interesting account of the trial and execution of the Counts Egmont and Horn, which is, however, too long for insertion here.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARGARET OF PARMA, Daughter of Charles V., and Regent of the Netherlands.
COUNT EGMONT, Prince of Gaure.
WILLIAM OF ORANGE.
THE DUKE OF ALVA.
FERDINAND, his Natural Son.
MACHIAVEL, in the service of the Regent.
RICHARD, Egmont's Private Secretary.
SILVA, GOMEZ, } in the service of Alva.
CLARA, the beloved of Egmont.
HER MOTHER.
BRACKENBURG, a Citizen's Son.
SOEST, a Shopkeeper,
JETTER, a Tailor,
A CARPENTER,
A SOAPBOILER,
} Citizens of Brussels.
BUYCK, a Hollander, a Soldier under Egmont.
RUYSUM, a Frieslander, an invalid Soldier and deaf.
VANSEN, a Clerk.

People, Attendants, Guards, etc.

The Scene is laid in Brussels.

Egmont

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Soldiers and Citizens (with cross-bows).*

JETTER (*steps forward, and bends his cross-bow*). SOEST, BUYCK, RUYSUM.

SOEST. Come, shoot away, and have done with it! You won't beat me! Three black rings, you never made such a shot in all your life. And so I'm master for this year.

JETTER. Master and king to boot; who envies you? You'll have to pay double reckoning; 'tis only fair you should pay for your dexterity.

BUYCK. Jetter, I'll buy your shot, share the prize, and treat the company. I have already been here so long, and am a debtor for so many civilities. If I miss, then it shall be as if you had shot.

SOEST. I ought to have a voice, for in fact I am the loser. No matter! Come, Buyck, shoot away.

BUYCK. (*shoots*) Now, corporal, look out! — One! Two! Three! Four!

SOEST. Four rings! So be it!

ALL. Hurrah! Long live the king! Hurrah! Hurrah!

BUYCK. Thanks, sirs, master even were too much! Thanks for the honour.

JETTER. You have no one to thank but yourself.

RUYSUM. Let me tell you! —

SOEST. How now, gray-beard?

RUYSUM. Let me tell you! He shoots like his master, he shoots like Egmont.

BUYCK. Compared with him I am only a bungler. He aims with the rifle as no one else does. Not only when he's lucky or in the vein; no! he levels, and the bull's-eye is pierced. I have learned from him. He were, indeed, a blockhead, who could serve under him and learn nothing! — But, sirs, let us not forget: A king maintains his followers; and so, wine here, at the king's charge!

JETTER. We have agreed among ourselves that each —

BUYCK. I am a foreigner and a king, and care not a jot for your laws and customs.

JETTER. Why, you are worse than the Spaniard, who has not yet ventured to meddle with them.

RUYSUM. What does he say?

SOEST. (*loud to* RUYSUM) He wants to treat us; he will not hear of our clubbing together, the king paying only a double share.

RUYSUM. Let him! under protest, however! 'Tis his master's fashion, too, to be munificent, and to let the money flow in a good cause. (*Wine is brought.*)

ALL. Here's to his Majesty! Hurrah!

JETTER. (*to* BUYCK) That means your Majesty, of course.

BUYCK. My hearty thanks, if it be so.

SOEST. Assuredly! A Netherlander does not find it easy to drink the health of his Spanish Majesty from his heart.

RUYSUM. Who?

SOEST. (*aloud*) Philip the Second, King of Spain.

RUYSUM. Our most gracious king and master! Long life to him.

SOEST. Did you not like his father, Charles the Fifth, better?

RUYSUM. God bless him! He was a king, indeed! His hand reached over the whole earth, and he was all in all. Yet, when he met you, he'd greet you just as one neighbour greets another, — and if you were frightened, he knew so well how to put you at your ease — ay, you understand me — he walked out, rode out, just as it came into his head, with very few followers. We all wept when he resigned the government here to his son. You understand me — he is another sort of man, he's more majestic.

JETTER. When he was here he never appeared in public, except in pomp and royal state. He speaks little, they say.

SOEST. He is no king for us Netherlanders. Our princes must be joyous and free like ourselves, must live and let live. We will neither be despised nor oppressed, good-natured fools though we be.

JETTER. The king, methinks, were a gracious sovereign enough, if he had only better counsellors.

SOEST. No, no! He has no affection for us Netherlanders; he has no heart for the people; he loves us not; how then can we love him? Why is everybody so fond of Count Egmont? Why are we all so devoted to him? Why, because one can read in his face that he loves us; because joyousness, open-heartedness, and good nature speak in his eyes; because he possesses nothing that he does not share with him who needs it, ay, and with him who needs it not. Long live Count Egmont! Buyck, it is for you to give the first toast; give us your master's health.

BUYCK. With all my heart; here's to Count Egmont! Hurrah!

RUYSUM. Conqueror of St. Quintin.

BUYCK. The hero of Gravelines.

ALL. Hurrah!

RUYSUM. St. Quintin was my last battle. I was hardly able to crawl along, and could with difficulty carry my heavy rifle. I managed, notwithstanding, to singe the skin of the French once more, and, as a parting gift, received a grazing shot in my right leg.

BUYCK. Gravelines! Ha, my friends, we had sharp work of it there! The victory was all our own. Did not those French dogs carry fire and desolation into the very heart of Flanders? We gave it them, however! The old, hard-fisted veterans held out bravely for awhile, but we pushed on, fired away, and laid about us till they made wry faces, and their lines gave way. Then Egmont's horse was shot under him; and for a long time we fought pell-mell, man to man, horse to horse, troop to troop, on the broad, flat sea-sand. Suddenly, as if from heaven, down came the cannon-shot from the mouth of the river, bang, bang, right into the midst of the French. These were English who, under Admiral Malin, happened to be sailing past from Dunkirk. They did not help us much, 'tis true; they could only approach with their smallest vessels, and that not near enough; — besides, their shot fell sometimes among our troops. It did some good, however! It broke the French lines, and raised our courage. Away it went. Helter-skelter! topsy-turvy! all struck dead, or forced into the water; the fellows were drowned the moment they tasted the water, while we Hollanders dashed in after them. Being amphibious, we were as much in our element as frogs, and hacked away at the enemy, and shot them down as if they had been ducks. The few who struggled through were struck dead in their flight by the peasant women, armed with hoes and pitchforks. His Gallic Majesty was compelled at once to hold out his paw and make peace. And that peace you owe to us, to the great Egmont.

ALL. Hurrah for the great Egmont! Hurrah! Hurrah!

JETTER. Had they but appointed him Regent instead of Margaret of Parma!

SOEST. Not so! Truth is truth! I'll not hear Margaret abused. Now it is my turn. Long live our gracious lady!

ALL. Long life to her!

SOEST. Truly, there are excellent women in that family. Long live the Regent!

JETTER. Prudent she is, and moderate in all she does; if she would only not hold so fast and stiffly with the priests. It is partly her fault, too, that we have the fourteen new mitres in the land. Of what use are they, I should like to know? Why, that foreigners may be shoved into the good benefices, where formerly abbots were chosen out of the chapters! And we're to believe it's for the sake of religion. We know better. Three bishops were enough for us; things went on decently and reputably. Now each must busy himself as if he were needed; and this gives rise every moment to dissensions and ill-will. And the more you agitate the matter, so much the worse it grows. (*They drink.*)

SOEST. But it was the will of the king; she cannot alter it, one way or another.

JETTER. Then we may not even sing the new psalms, but ribald songs, as many as we please. And why? There is heresy in them, they say, and heaven knows what. I have sung some of them, however; they are new, to be sure, but I see no harm in them.

BUYCK. Ask their leave, forsooth! In our province we sing just what we please. That's because Count Egmont is our stadtholder, who does not trouble himself about such matters. In Ghent, Ypres, and throughout the whole of Flanders, anybody sings them that chooses. (*Aloud to* RUYSUM.) There is nothing more harmless than a church hymn — is there, father?

RUYSUM. What, indeed! It is a godly work, and truly edifying.

JETTER. They say, however, that they are not of the right sort, not of their sort, and, since it is dangerous, we had better leave them alone. The officers of the Inquisition are always lurking and spying about; many an honest fellow has already fallen into their clutches. They had not gone so far as to meddle with conscience! If they will not allow me to do what I like, they might at least let me think and sing as I please.

SOEST. The Inquisition won't do here. We are not made like the Spaniards, to let our consciences be tyrannised over. The nobles must look to it, and clip its wings betimes.

JETTER. It is a great bore. Whenever it comes into their worships' heads to break into my house, and I am sitting there at my work, humming a French psalm, thinking nothing about it, neither good nor bad — singing it just because it is in my throat; — forthwith I am a heretic, and am clapped into prison. Or, if I am passing through the country, and stand near a crowd listening to a new preacher, one of those who have come from Germany, instantly I am called a rebel, and am in danger of losing my head! Have you ever heard one of these preachers?

SOEST. A worthy set of people! Not long ago I heard one of them preach in a field, before thousands and thousands of people. He gave us a sort of dish very different from that of our humdrum preachers, who, from the pulpit, choke their hearers with scraps of Latin. He spoke from his heart; told us how we had till now been led by the nose, how we had been kept in darkness, and how we might procure more light; — ay, and he proved it all out of the Bible.

JETTER. There may be something in it. I always said as much, and have often pondered over the matter. It has long been running in my head.

BUYCK. All the people run after them.

SOEST. No wonder, since they hear both what is good and what is new.

JETTER. And what is it all about? Surely they might let every one preach after his own fashion.

BUYCK. Come, sirs! While you are talking, you forget the wine and the Prince of Orange.

JETTER. We must not forget him. He's a very wall of defence. In thinking of him, one fancies that if one could only hide behind him, the devil himself could not get at one. Here's to William of Orange! Hurrah!

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah!

SOEST. Now, gray-beard, let's have your toast.

RUYSUM. Here's to old soldiers! To all soldiers! War for ever!

BUYCK. Bravo, old fellow. Here's to all soldiers. War for ever!

JETTER. War! War! Do ye know what ye are shouting about? That it should slip glibly from your tongue is natural enough; but what wretched work it is for us, I have not words to tell you. To be stunned the whole year round by the beating of the drum; to hear of nothing except how one troop marched here, and another there; how they came over this height and halted near that mill; how many were left dead on this field, and how many on that; how they press forward, and how one wins, and another loses, without being able to comprehend what they are fighting about; how a town is taken, how the citizens are put to the sword, and how it fares with the poor women and innocent children. This is a grief and a trouble, and then one thinks every moment, "Here they come! It will be our turn next."

SOEST. Therefore every citizen must be practised in the use of arms.

JETTER. Fine talking, indeed, for him who has

a wife and children. And yet I would rather hear of soldiers than see them.

BUYCK. I might take offence at that.

JETTER. It was not intended for you, countryman. When we got rid of the Spanish garrison we breathed freely again.

SOEST. Faith! they pressed on you heavily enough.

JETTER. Mind your own business.

SOEST. They came to sharp quarters with you.

JETTER. Hold your tongue.

SOEST. They drove him out of kitchen, cellar, chamber — and bed. (*They laugh.*)

JETTER. You are a blockhead.

BUYCK. Peace, sirs! Must the soldier cry peace? Since you will not hear anything about us, let us have a toast of your own — a citizen's toast.

JETTER. We're all ready for that! Safety and peace!

SOEST. Order and freedom!

BUYCK. Bravo! That will content us all.

[*They ring their glasses together, and joyously repeat the words, but in such a manner that each utters a different sound, and it becomes a kind of chant. The old man listens, and at length joins in.*

ALL. Safety and peace! Order and freedom!

SCENE II. — *Palace of the* REGENT.

MARGARET OF PARMA (*in a hunting dress*). COURTIERS, PAGES, SERVANTS.

REGENT. Put off the hunt, I shall not ride to-day. Bid Machiavel attend me. [*Exeunt all but the* REGENT.

The thought of these terrible events leaves me no repose! Nothing can amuse, nothing divert my mind.

These images, these cares, are always before me. The king will now say that these are the natural fruits of my kindness, of my clemency; yet my conscience assures me that I have adopted the wisest, the most prudent course. Ought I sooner to have kindled and spread abroad these flames with the breath of wrath? my hope was to keep them in, to let them smoulder in their own ashes. Yes, my inward conviction, and my knowledge of the circumstances, justify my conduct in my own eyes; but in what light will it appear to my brother? For can it be denied that the insolence of these foreign teachers waxes daily more audacious? They have desecrated our sanctuaries, unsettled the dull minds of the people and conjured up amongst them a spirit of delusion. Impure spirits have mingled among the insurgents, horrible deeds have been perpetrated, which to think of makes one shudder, and of these a circumstantial account must be transmitted to court instantly. Prompt and minute must be my communication, lest rumour outrun my messenger, and the king suspect that some particulars have been purposely withheld. I can see no means, severe or mild, by which to stem the evil. Oh, what are we great ones on the waves of humanity? We think to control them, and are ourselves driven to and fro, hither and thither.

Enter MACHIAVEL.

REGENT. Are the despatches to the king prepared?

MACHIAVEL. In an hour they will be ready for your signature.

REGENT. Have you made the report sufficiently circumstantial?

MACHIAVEL. Full and circumstantial, as the king loves to have it. I relate how the rage of the iconoclasts first broke out at St. Omer. How a furious

multitude, with staves, hatchets, hammers, ladders and cords, accompanied by a few armed men, first assailed the chapels, churches, and convents, drove out the worshippers, forced the barred gates, threw everything into confusion, tore down the altars, destroyed the statues of the saints, defaced the pictures, and dashed to atoms and trampled under foot whatever that was consecrated and holy came in their way. How the crowd increased as it advanced, and how the inhabitants of Ypres opened their gates at its approach. How, with incredible rapidity, they demolished the cathedral, and burned the library of the bishop. How a vast multitude, possessed by the like frenzy, dispersed themselves through Menin, Comines, Verviers, Lille, nowhere encountered opposition; and how, through almost the whole of Flanders, in a single moment, the monstrous conspiracy declared itself and was accomplished.

REGENT. Alas! Your recital rends my heart anew; and the fear that the evil will wax greater and greater adds to my grief. Tell me your thoughts, Machiavel!

MACHIAVEL. Pardon me, your Highness, my thoughts will appear to you but as idle fancies; and though you always seem well satisfied with my services, you have seldom felt inclined to follow my advice. How often have you said in jest: "You see too far, Machiavel! You should be an historian; he who acts must provide for the exigency of the hour." And yet, have I not predicted this terrible history? Have I not foreseen it all?

REGENT. I, too, foresee many things without being able to avert them.

MACHIAVEL. In one word, then: — you will not be able to suppress the new faith. Let it be recognised, separate its votaries from the true believers, give them churches of their own, include them within the pale of social order, subject them to the restraints of law, —

do this, and you will at once tranquillise the insurgents. All other measures will prove abortive, and you will depopulate the country.

REGENT. Have you forgotten with what aversion the mere suggestion of toleration was rejected by my brother? Know you not, how in every letter he urgently recommends to me the maintenance of the true faith? That he will not hear of tranquillity and order being restored at the expense of religion? Even in the provinces, does he not maintain spies, unknown to us, in order to ascertain who inclines to the new doctrines? Has he not, to our astonishment, named to us this or that individual residing in our very neighbourhood, who, without its being known, was obnoxious to the charge of heresy? Does he not enjoin harshness and severity? and am I to be lenient? Am I to recommend for his adoption measures of indulgence and toleration? Should I not thus lose all credit with him, and at once forfeit his confidence?

MACHIAVEL. I know it. The king commands, and puts you in full possession of his intentions. You are to restore tranquillity and peace by measures which cannot fail still more to embitter men's minds and which must inevitably kindle the flames of war from one extremity of the country to the other. Consider well what you are doing. The principal merchants are infected — nobles, citizens, soldiers. What avails persisting in our opinion when everything is changing around us? Oh, that some good genius would suggest to Philip that it better becomes a monarch to govern burghers of two different creeds, than to excite them to mutual destruction!

REGENT. Never let me hear such words again. Full well I know that the policy of statesmen rarely maintains truth and fidelity; that it excludes from the heart candour, charity, toleration. In secular affairs, this is, alas! only too true; but shall we trifle with

God as we do with each other? Shall we be indifferent to our established faith, for the sake of which so many have sacrificed their lives? Shall we abandon it to these far-fetched, uncertain, and self-contradicting heresies?

MACHIAVEL. Think not the worse of me for what I have uttered.

REGENT. I know you and your fidelity. I know, too, that a man may be both honest and sagacious, and yet miss the best and nearest way to the salvation of his soul. There are others, Machiavel, men whom I esteem, yet whom I needs must blame.

MACHIAVEL. To whom do you refer?

REGENT. I must confess that Egmont caused me to-day deep and heartfelt annoyance.

MACHIAVEL. How so?

REGENT. By his accustomed demeanour, his usual indifference and levity. I received the fatal tidings as I was leaving church, attended by him and several others. I did not restrain my anguish. I broke forth into lamentations, loud and deep, and turning to him, exclaimed, "See what is going on in your province! Do you suffer it, count, you in whom the king confided so implicitly?"

MACHIAVEL. And what was his reply?

REGENT. As if it were a mere trifle, an affair of no moment, he answered: "Were the Netherlanders but satisfied as to their constitution, the rest would soon follow."

MACHIAVEL. There was, perhaps, more truth than discretion or piety in his words. How can we hope to acquire and to maintain the confidence of the Netherlander when he sees that we are more interested in appropriating his possessions than in promoting his welfare, temporal or spiritual? Does the number of souls saved by the new bishops exceed that of the fat benefices they have swallowed? And are they not

for the most part foreigners? As yet, the office of stadtholder has been held by Netherlanders; but do not the Spaniards betray their great and irresistible desire to possess themselves of these places? Will not people prefer being governed by their own countrymen, and according to their ancient customs, rather than by foreigners, who, from their first entrance into the land, endeavour to enrich themselves at the general expense, who measure everything by a foreign standard, and exercise their authority without cordiality or sympathy?

REGENT. You take part with our opponents?

MACHIAVEL. Assuredly not in my heart. Would that with my understanding I could be wholly on our side.

REGENT. If such is your opinion, it were better I should resign the regency to them; for both Egmont and Orange entertained great hopes of occupying this position. Then they were adversaries; now they are leagued against me, and have become friends — inseparable friends.

MACHIAVEL. A dangerous pair.

REGENT. To speak candidly, I fear Orange. — I fear for Egmont. — Orange meditates some dangerous scheme, his thoughts are far-reaching, he is reserved, appears to accede to everything, never contradicts, and while maintaining the show of reverence, with clear foresight accomplishes his own designs.

MACHIAVEL. Egmont, on the contrary, advances with a bold step, as if the world were all his own.

REGENT. He bears his head as proudly as if the hand of Majesty were not suspended over him.

MACHIAVEL. The eyes of all the people are fixed upon him, and he is the idol of their hearts.

REGENT. He has never assumed the least disguise, and carries himself as if no one had a right to call him to account. He still bears the name of Egmont.

Count Egmont is the title by which he loves to hear himself addressed, as though he would fain be reminded that his ancestors were masters of Guelderland. Why does he not assume his proper title, — Prince of Gaure? What object has he in view? Would he again revive extinguished claims?

MACHIAVEL. I hold him to be a faithful servant of the king.

REGENT. Were he so inclined, what important service he could render to the government! Whereas now, without benefiting himself he has caused us unspeakable vexation. His banquets and entertainments have done more to unite the nobles and to knit them together than the most dangerous secret associations. With his toasts his guests have drunk in a permanent intoxication, a giddy frenzy, that never subsides. How often have his facetious jests stirred up the minds of the populace? and what an excitement was produced among the mob by the new liveries and the extravagant devices of his followers!

MACHIAVEL. I am convinced he had no design.

REGENT. Be that as it may, it is bad enough. As I said before, he injures us without benefiting himself. He treats as a jest matters of serious import; and, not to appear negligent and remiss, we are forced to treat seriously what he intended as a jest. Thus one urges on the other; and what we are endeavouring to avert is actually brought to pass. He is more dangerous than the acknowledged head of a conspiracy; and I am much mistaken if it is not all remembered against him at court. I cannot deny that scarcely a day passes in which he does not wound me — deeply wound me.

MACHIAVEL. He appears to me to act on all occasions according to the dictates of his conscience.

REGENT. His conscience has a convenient mirror. His demeanour is often offensive. He carries himself

as if he felt he were the master here, and were withheld by courtesy alone from making us feel his supremacy; as if he would not exactly drive us out of the country; there'll be no need for that.

MACHIAVEL. I entreat you, put not too harsh a construction upon his frank and joyous temper, which treats lightly matters of serious moment. You but injure yourself and him.

REGENT. I interpret nothing. I speak only of inevitable consequences, and I know him. His patent of nobility and the Golden Fleece upon his breast strengthen his confidence, his audacity. Both can protect him against any sudden outbreak of royal displeasure. Consider the matter closely, and he is alone responsible for the whole mischief that has broken out in Flanders. From the first, he connived at the proceedings of the foreign teachers, avoided stringent measures, and perhaps rejoiced in secret that they gave us so much to do. Let me alone; on this occasion, I will give utterance to that which weighs upon my heart; I will not shoot my arrow in vain. I know where he is vulnerable. For he is vulnerable.

MACHIAVEL. Have you summoned the council? Will Orange attend?

REGENT. I have sent for him to Antwerp. I will lay upon their shoulders the burden of responsibility; they shall either strenuously coöperate with me in quelling the evil, or at once declare themselves rebels. Let the letters be completed without delay, and bring them for my signature. Then hasten to despatch the trusty Vasca to Madrid; he is faithful and indefatigable; let him use all diligence, that he may not be anticipated by common report, that my brother may receive the intelligence first through him. I will myself speak with him ere he departs.

MACHIAVEL. Your orders shall be promptly and punctually obeyed.

SCENE III. — *Citizen's House.*

CLARA, *her* MOTHER, BRACKENBURG.

CLARA. Will you not hold the yarn for me, Brackenburg?

BRACKENBURG. I entreat you, excuse me, Clara.

CLARA. What ails you? Why refuse me this trifling service?

BRACKENBURG. When I hold the yarn, I stand as it were spellbound before you, and cannot escape your eyes.

CLARA. Nonsense! Come and hold!

MOTHER. (*knitting in her armchair*) Give us a song! Brackenburg sings so good a second. You used to be merry once, and I had always something to laugh at.

BRACKENBURG. Once!

CLARA. Well, let us sing.

BRACKENBURG. As you please.

CLARA. Merrily, then, and sing away. 'Tis a soldier's song, my favourite. (*She winds yarn, and sings with* BRACKENBURG.)

The drum is resounding,
And shrill the fife plays;
My love, for the battle,
His brave troop arrays;
He lifts his lance high,
And the people he sways.
My blood it is boiling!
My heart throbs pit-pat!
Oh, had I a jacket,
With hose and with hat!

How boldly I'd follow,
And march through the gate;
Through all the wide province
I'd follow him straight.

The foe yield, we capture
Or shoot them! Ah, me!
What heart-thrilling rapture
A soldier to be!

(*During the song,* BRACKENBURG *has frequently looked at* CLARA; *at length his voice falters, his eyes fill with tears, he lets the skein fall, and goes to the window.* CLARA *finishes the song alone, her mother motions to her, half displeased, she rises, advances a few steps toward him, turns back as if irresolute, and again sits down.*

MOTHER. What is going on in the street, Brackenburg? I hear soldiers marching.

BRACKENBURG. It is the regent's body-guard.

CLARA. At this hour? What can it mean? (*She rises and joins* BRACKENBURG *at the window.*) That is not the daily guard; it is more numerous! almost all the troops! Oh, Brackenburg, go! Learn what it means. It must be something unusual. Go, good Brackenburg, do me this favour.

BRACKENBURG. I am going! I will return immediately. (*He offers his hand to* CLARA, *and she gives him hers.*) [*Exit* BRACKENBURG.

MOTHER. Thou sendest him away so soon!

CLARA. I am curious; and, besides — do not be angry, mother — his presence pains me. I never know how I ought to behave toward him. I have done him a wrong, and it goes to my very heart to see how deeply he feels it. Well, it can't be helped now!

MOTHER. He is such a true-hearted fellow!

CLARA. I cannot help it, I must treat him kindly. Often, without a thought, I return the gentle, loving pressure of his hand. I reproach myself that I am deceiving him, that I am nourishing in his heart a vain hope. I am in a sad plight! God knows I

do not willingly deceive him. I do not wish him to hope, yet I cannot let him despair!

MOTHER. That is not as it should be.

CLARA. I liked him once, and in my soul I like him still. I could have married him; yet I believe I was never really in love with him.

MOTHER. Thou wouldst always have been happy with him.

CLARA. I should have been provided for, and have led a quiet life.

MOTHER. And through thy fault it has all been trifled away.

CLARA. I am in a strange position. When I think how it has come to pass, I know it, indeed, and I know it not. But I have only to look upon Egmont, and I understand it all: ay, and stranger things would seem natural then. Oh, what a man he is! All the provinces worship him. And in his arms should not I be the happiest creature in the world?

MOTHER. And how will it be in the future?

CLARA. I only ask does he love me?—does he love me?—as if there were any doubt about it.

MOTHER. One has nothing but anxiety of heart with one's children. Always care and sorrow, whatever may be the end of it! It cannot come to good! Thou hast made thyself wretched! Thou hast made thy mother wretched, too.

CLARA. (*quietly*) Yet thou didst allow it in the beginning.

MOTHER. Alas! I was too indulgent; I am always too indulgent.

CLARA. When Egmont rode by, and I ran to the window, did you chide me then? Did you not come to the window yourself? When he looked up, smiled, nodded, and greeted me, was it displeasing to you? Did you not feel yourself honoured in your daughter?

MOTHER. Go on with your reproaches.

CLARA. (*with emotion*) Then, when he passed more frequently, and we felt sure that it was on my account that he came this way, did you not remark it yourself with secret joy? Did you call me away when I stood behind the window-pane and awaited him?

MOTHER. Could I imagine that it would go so far?

CLARA. (*with faltering voice and repressed tears*) And then, one evening, when, enveloped in his mantle, he surprised us as we sat at our lamp, who busied herself in receiving him, while I remained, lost in astonishment, as if fastened to my chair?

MOTHER. Could I imagine that the prudent Clara would so soon be carried away by this unhappy love? I must now endure that, my daughter —

CLARA. (*bursting into tears*) Mother! How can you? You take pleasure in tormenting me!

MOTHER. (*weeping*) Ay, weep away! Make me yet more wretched by thy grief. Is it not misery enough that my only daughter is a castaway?

CLARA. (*rising and speaking coldly*) A castaway! The beloved of Egmont a castaway! — What princess would not envy the poor Clara a place in his heart? Oh, mother, — my own mother, you were not wont to speak thus! Dear mother, be kind! — Let the people think, let the neighbours whisper, what they like — this chamber, this lowly house, is a paradise since Egmont's love has had its abode in it.

MOTHER. One cannot help liking him, that is true. He is always so kind, frank, and open-hearted.

CLARA. There is not a drop of false blood in his veins. And then, mother, he is indeed the great Egmont; yet, when he comes to me, how tender he is, how kind! How he tries to conceal from me his rank, his bravery! How anxious he is about me! so entirely the man, the friend, the lover.

MOTHER. Do you expect him to-day?

CLARA. Have you not seen how often I go to the window? Have you not noticed how I listen to every noise at the door? — Though I know that he will not come before night, yet, from the time when I rise in the morning, I keep expecting him every moment. Were I but a boy, to follow him always, to the court and everywhere! Could I but carry his colours in the field! —

MOTHER. You were always such a lively, restless creature; even as a little child, now wild, now thoughtful. Will you not dress yourself a little better?

CLARA. Perhaps, mother, if I have nothing better to do. — Yesterday, some of his people went by singing songs in his honour. At least his name was in the songs! The rest I could not understand. My heart leaped up into my throat, — I would fain have called them back if I had not felt ashamed.

MOTHER. Take care! Thy impetuous nature will ruin all. Thou wilt betray thyself before the people; as, not long ago, at thy cousin's, when thou foundest out the woodcut with the description, and didst exclaim, with a cry: "Count Egmont!" — I grew as red as fire.

CLARA. Could I help crying out? It was the battle of Gravelines, and I found in the picture the letter C. and then looked for it in the description below. There it stood, "Count Egmont, with his horse shot under him." I shuddered, and afterward I could not help laughing at the woodcut figure of Egmont, as tall as the neighbouring tower of Gravelines, and the English ships at the side. — When I remember how I used to conceive of a battle, and what an idea I had, as a girl, of Count Egmont; when I listened to descriptions of him, and of all the other earls and princes; and think how it is with me now!

Enter BRACKENBURG.

CLARA. Well, what is going on?

BRACKENBURG. Nothing certain is known. It is rumoured that an insurrection has lately broken out in Flanders; the regent is afraid of its spreading here. The castle is strongly garrisoned, the burghers are crowding to the gates, and the streets are thronged with people. I will hasten at once to my old father. (*As if about to go.*)

CLARA. Shall we see you to-morrow? I must change my dress a little. I am expecting my cousin, and I look too untidy. Come, mother, help me a moment. Take the book, Brackenburg, and bring me such another story.

MOTHER. Farewell.

BRACKENBURG. (*extending his hand*) Your hand!

CLARA. (*refusing hers*) When you come next.

[*Exeunt* MOTHER *and* DAUGHTER.

BRACKENBURG. (*alone*) I had resolved to go away again at once; and yet, when she takes me at my word, and lets me leave her, I feel as if I could go mad. — Wretched man! Does the fate of thy fatherland, does the growing disturbance fail to move thee? — Are countryman and Spaniard the same to thee? and carest thou not who rules, and who is in the right? — I was a different sort of fellow as a schoolboy! — Then, when an exercise in oratory was given, "Brutus' Speech for Liberty," for instance, Fritz was ever the first, and the rector would say: "If it were only spoken more deliberately, the words not all huddled together." — Then my blood boiled, and longed for action. — Now I drag along, bound by the eyes of a maiden. I cannot leave her! yet she, alas, cannot love me! — ah — no — she — she cannot have entirely rejected me — not entirely — yet half love is no love! — I will endure it no longer! — Can it be

true what a friend lately whispered in my ear, that she secretly admits a man into the house by night, when she always sends me away modestly before evening? No, it cannot be true! It is a lie! A base, slanderous lie! Clara is as innocent as I am wretched. — She has rejected me, has thrust me from her heart — and shall I live on thus? I cannot, I will not endure it. Already my native land is convulsed by internal strife, and do I perish abjectly amid the tumult? I will not endure it! When the trumpet sounds, when a shot falls, it thrills through my bone and marrow! But, alas, it does not rouse me! It does not summon me to join the onslaught, to rescue, to dare. — Wretched, degrading position! Better end it at once! Not long ago I threw myself into the water; I sank — but nature in her agony was too strong for me; I felt that I could swim, and saved myself against my will. Could I but forget the time when she loved me, seemed to love me! — Why has this happiness penetrated my very bone and marrow? Why have these hopes, while disclosing to me a distant paradise, consumed all the enjoyment of life? — And that first, that only kiss! — Here (*laying his hand upon the table*), here we were alone, — she had always been kind and friendly toward me, — then she seemed to soften, — she looked at me, — my brain reeled, — I felt her lips on mine, — and — and now? — Die, wretch! Why dost thou hesitate? (*He draws a phial from his pocket.*) Thou healing poison, it shall not have been in vain that I stole thee from my brother's medicine chest! From this anxious fear, this dizziness, this death-agony, thou shalt deliver me at once.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Square in Brussels.*

JETTER *and a* MASTER CARPENTER (*meeting*).

CARPENTER. Did I not tell you beforehand? Eight days ago at the guild I said there would be serious disturbances!

JETTER. Is it really true that they have plundered the churches in Flanders?

CARPENTER. They have utterly destroyed both churches and chapels. They have left nothing standing but the four bare walls. The lowest rabble! And this it is that damages our good cause. We ought rather to have laid our claims before the regent, formally and decidedly, and then have stood by them. If we speak now, if we assemble now, it will be said that we are joining the insurgents.

JETTER. Ay, so every one thinks at first. Why should you thrust your nose into the mess? The neck is closely connected with it.

CARPENTER. I am always uneasy when tumults arise among the mob — among people who have nothing to lose. They use as a pretext that to which we also must appeal, and plunge the country in misery.

Enter SOEST.

SOEST. Good day, sirs! What news? Is it true that the image-breakers are coming straight in this direction?

CARPENTER. Here they shall touch nothing, at any rate.

SOEST. A soldier came into my shop just now to buy tobacco! I questioned him about the matter.

The regent, though so brave and prudent a lady, has for once lost her presence of mind. Things must be bad, indeed, when she thus takes refuge behind her guards. The castle is strongly garrisoned. It is even rumoured that she means to flee from the town.

CARPENTER. Forth she shall not go! Her presence protects us, and we will ensure her safety better than her mustachioed gentry. If she only maintains our rights and privileges, we will stand faithfully by her.

Enter a SOAPBOILER.

SOAPBOILER. An ugly business this! a bad business! Troubles are beginning; all things are going wrong! Mind you keep quiet, or they'll take you also for rioters.

SOEST. Here come the seven wise men of Greece.

SOAPBOILER. I know there are many who in secret hold with the Calvinists, abuse the bishops, and care not for the king. But a loyal subject, a sincere Catholic! — (*By degrees others join the speakers and listen.*)

Enter VANSEN.

VANSEN. God save you, sirs! What news?

CARPENTER. Have nothing to do with him, he's a dangerous fellow.

JETTER. Is he not secretary to Doctor Wiets?

CARPENTER. He has had several masters. First he was a clerk, and as one patron after another turned him off, on account of his roguish tricks, he now dabbles in the business of notary and advocate, and is a brandy drinker to boot. (*More people gather round and stand in groups.*)

VANSEN. So here you are putting your heads together. Well, it is worth talking about.

SOEST. I think so, too.

VANSEN. Now, if only one of you had heart and another head enough for the work, we might break the Spanish fetters at once.

SOEST. Sirs! you must not talk thus. We have taken our oath to the king.

VANSEN. And the king to us. Mark that!

JETTER. There's sense in that! Tell us your opinion.

OTHERS. Hearken to him; he's a clever fellow. He's sharp enough.

VANSEN. I had an old master once, who possessed a collection of parchments, among which were charters of ancient constitutions, contracts, and privileges. He set great store, too, by the rarest books. One of these contained our whole constitution; how, at first, we Netherlanders had princes of our own, who governed according to hereditary laws, rights, and usages; how our ancestors paid due honour to their sovereign so long as he governed them equitably; and how they were immediately on their guard the moment he was for overstepping his bounds. The states were down upon him at once; for every province, however small, had its own chamber and representatives.

CARPENTER. Hold your tongue! we knew that long ago! Every honest citizen learns as much about the constitution as he needs.

JETTER. Let him speak; one may always learn something.

SOEST. He is quite right.

SEVERAL CITIZENS. Go on! Go on! One does not hear this every day.

VANSEN. You, citizens, forsooth! You live only in the present; and as you tamely follow the trade inherited from your fathers, so you let the government do with you just as it pleases. You make no inquiry into the origin, the history, or the rights of a regent; and, in consequence of this negligence, the Spaniard has drawn the net over your ears.

SOEST. Who cares for that, if one only has daily bread?

JETTER. The devil! Why did not some one come forward and tell us this in time?

VANSEN. I tell it you now. The King of Spain, whose good fortune it is to bear sway over these provinces, has no right to govern them otherwise than the petty princes who formerly possessed them separately. Do you understand that?

JETTER. Explain it to us.

VANSEN. Why, it is as clear as the sun. Must you not be governed according to your provincial laws? How comes that?

A CITIZEN. Certainly!

VANSEN. Has not the burgher of Brussels a different law from the burgher of Antwerp? The burgher of Antwerp from the burgher of Ghent? How comes that?

ANOTHER CITIZEN. By heaven!

VANSEN. But if you let matters run on thus they will soon tell you a different story. Fie on you! Philip, through a woman, now ventures to do what neither Charles the Bold, Frederick the Warrior, nor Charles the Fifth could accomplish.

SOEST. Yes, yes! The old princes tried it also.

VANSEN. Ay! but our ancestors kept a sharp lookout. If they thought themselves aggrieved by their sovereign, they would perhaps get his son and heir into their hands, detain him as a hostage, and surrender him only on the most favourable conditions. Our fathers were men! They knew their own interests! They knew how to lay hold on what they wanted, and to get it established! They were men of the right sort; and hence it is that our privileges are so clearly defined, our liberties so well secured.

SOEST. What are you saying about our liberties?

ALL. Our liberties! Our privileges! Tell us about our privileges.

VANSEN. All the provinces have their peculiar advantages, but we of Brabant are the most splendidly provided for. I have read it all.

SOEST. Say on.

JETTER. Let us hear.

A CITIZEN. Pray do.

VANSEN. First, it stands written: — The Duke of Brabant shall be to us a good and faithful sovereign.

SOEST. Good! Stands it so?

JETTER. Faithful? Is that true?

VANSEN. As I tell you. He is bound to us as we are to him. Secondly: in the exercise of his authority he shall neither exert arbitrary power nor exhibit caprice himself, nor shall he, either directly or indirectly sanction them in others.

JETTER. Bravo! Bravo! Not exert arbitrary power.

SOEST. Nor exhibit caprice.

ANOTHER. And not sanction them in others! That is the main point. Not sanction them, either directly or indirectly.

VANSEN. In express words.

JETTER. Get us the book.

A CITIZEN. Yes, we must see it.

OTHERS. The book! The book!

ANOTHER. We will to the regent with the book.

ANOTHER. Sir doctor, you shall be spokesman.

SOAPBOILER. Oh, the dolts!

OTHERS. Something more out of the book!

SOAPBOILER. I'll knock his teeth down his throat if he says another word.

PEOPLE. We'll see who dares to lay hands upon him. Tell us about our privileges! Have we any more privileges?

VANSEN. Many, very good and very wholesome ones, too. Thus it stands: The sovereign shall neither benefit the clergy, nor increase their number, without

the consent of the nobles and of the states. Mark that! Nor shall he alter the constitution of the country.

SOEST. Stands it so?

VANSEN. I'll show it you, as it was written down two or three centuries ago.

A CITIZEN. And we tolerate the new bishop? The nobles must protect us, we will make a row else!

OTHERS. And we suffer ourselves to be intimidated by the Inquisition?

VANSEN. It is your own fault.

PEOPLE. We have Egmont! We have Orange! They will protect our interests.

VANSEN. Your brothers in Flanders are beginning the good work.

SOAPBOILER. Dog! (*Strikes him.*)

OTHERS *oppose the* SOAPBOILER, *and exclaim.* Are you also a Spaniard?

ANOTHER. What! This honourable man?

ANOTHER. This learned man?

(*They attack the* SOAPBOILER.)

CARPENTER. For heaven's sake, peace!

(*Others mingle in the fray.*)

CARPENTER. Citizens, what means this?

(*Boys whistle, throw stones, set on dogs; citizens stand and gape, people come running up, others walk quietly to and fro, others play all sorts of pranks, shout and huzza.*)

OTHERS. Freedom and privilege! Privilege and freedom!

Enter EGMONT *with followers.*

EGMONT. Peace! Peace! good people. What is the matter? Peace, I say! Separate them.

CARPENTER. My good lord, you come like an angel from heaven. Hush! See you nothing? Count Egmont! Honour to Count Egmont!

EGMONT. Here, too! What are you about? Burgher against burgher! Does not even the neighbourhood of our royal mistress oppose a barrier to this frenzy? Disperse yourselves, and go about your business. 'Tis a bad sign when you thus keep holiday on working days. How did the disturbance begin?

(*The tumult gradually subsides, and the people gather around* EGMONT.)

CARPENTER. They are fighting about their privileges.

EGMONT. Which they will forfeit through their own folly — and who are you? You seem honest people.

CARPENTER. 'Tis our wish to be so.

EGMONT. Your calling?

CARPENTER. A carpenter, and master of the guild.

EGMONT. And you?

SOEST. A shopkeeper.

EGMONT. And you?

JETTER. A tailor.

EGMONT. I remember, you were employed upon the liveries of my people. Your name is Jetter.

JETTER. To think of your Grace remembering it!

EGMONT. I do not easily forget any one whom I have seen or conversed with. Do what you can, good people, to keep the peace; you stand in bad enough repute already. Provoke not the king still farther. The power, after all, is in his hands. An honest burgher, who maintains himself industriously, has everywhere as much freedom as he needs.

CARPENTER. To be sure; that is just our misfortune! With all due deference, your Grace, 'tis the idle portion of the community, your drunkards and vagabonds, who quarrel for want of something to do, and clamour about privilege because they are hungry; they impose upon the curious and the credulous, and, in order to obtain a pot of beer, excite disturbances that will bring misery upon thousands. That is just what they want. We keep our houses and chests too

well guarded; they would fain drive us away from them with firebrands.

EGMONT. You shall have all needful assistance; measures have been taken to stem the evil by force. Make a firm stand against the new doctrines, and do not imagine that privileges are secured by sedition. Remain at home; suffer no crowds to assemble in the streets. Sensible people can accomplish much. (*In the meantime the crowd has for the most part dispersed.*)

CARPENTER. Thanks, your Excellency — thanks for your good opinion! We will do what in us lies. (*Exit* EGMONT.) A gracious lord! A true Netherlander! Nothing of the Spaniard about him.

JETTER. If we had only him for a regent. 'Tis a pleasure to follow him.

SOEST. The king won't hear of that. He takes care to appoint his own people to the place.

JETTER. Did you notice his dress? It was of the newest fashion — after the Spanish cut.

CARPENTER. A handsome gentleman.

JETTER. His head now were a dainty morsel for a headsman.

SOEST. Are you mad? What are you thinking about?

JETTER. It is stupid enough that such an idea should come into one's head! But so it is. Whenever I see a fine, long neck, I cannot help thinking how well it would suit the block. These cursed executions! One cannot get them out of one's head. When the lads are swimming, and I chance to see a naked back, I think forthwith of the dozens I have seen beaten with rods. If I meet a portly gentleman, I fancy I already see him being roasted at the stake. At night, in my dreams, I am tortured in every limb; one cannot have a single hour's enjoyment; all merriment and fun have long been forgotten. These terrible images seem burnt in upon my brain.

SCENE II. — EGMONT'S *Residence.*

His SECRETARY (*at a desk with papers. He rises impatiently*).

SECRETARY. He is not yet here! And I have been waiting already for two hours, pen in hand, the paper before me; and just to-day I am anxious to be off early. The floor burns under my feet. I can with difficulty restrain my impatience. "Be punctual to the hour." Such was his parting injunction; now he comes not. There is so much business to get through, I shall not have finished before midnight. He overlooks one's faults, it is true; methinks it would be better, though, were he more strict, so he dismissed one at the appointed time. One could then arrange one's plans. It is now full two hours since he came away from the regent; who knows whom he may have chanced to meet by the way?

Enter EGMONT.

EGMONT. Well, how do matters look?

SECRETARY. I am ready, and three couriers are waiting.

EGMONT. I have detained you too long; you look somewhat out of humour.

SECRETARY. In obedience to your command I have been in attendance for some time. Here are the papers.

EGMONT. Donna Elvira will be angry with me when she learns that I have detained you.

SECRETARY. You are pleased to jest.

EGMONT. No, no. Be not ashamed. I admire your taste. She is pretty, and I have no objection that you should have a friend at the castle. What say the letters?

SECRETARY. Much, my lord, but withal little that is satisfactory.

EGMONT. 'Tis well that we have pleasures at home; we have the less occasion to seek them from abroad. Is there much that requires attention?

SECRETARY. Enough, my lord; three couriers are in attendance.

EGMONT. Proceed! The most important.

SECRETARY. All are important.

EGMONT. One after the other; only be prompt.

SECRETARY. Captain Breda sends an account of the occurrences that have further taken place in Ghent and the surrounding districts. The tumult is for the most part allayed.

EGMONT. He doubtless reports individual acts of folly and temerity?

SECRETARY. He does, my lord.

EGMONT. Spare me the recital.

SECRETARY. Six of the mob who tore down the image of the Virgin at Verviers have been arrested. He inquires whether they are to be hanged like the others.

EGMONT. I am weary of hanging; let them be flogged and discharged.

SECRETARY. There are two women; are they to be flogged also?

EGMONT. He may admonish them and let them go.

SECRETARY. Brink, of Breda's company, wants to marry; the captain hopes you will not allow it. There are so many women among the troops, he writes, that when on the march they resemble a gang of gipsies rather than regular soldiers.

EGMONT. We must overlook it in his case. He is a fine young fellow, and moreover entreated me so earnestly before I came away. This must be the last time, however; though it grieves me to refuse the poor fellows their best pastime; they have enough without that to torment them.

SECRETARY. Two of your people, Seter and Hart, have ill-treated a damsel, the daughter of an innkeeper. They got her alone, and she could not escape from them.

EGMONT. If she be an honest maiden, and they used violence, let them be flogged three days in succession; and if they have any property, let him retain as much as will portion the girl.

SECRETARY. One of the foreign preachers has been discovered passing secretly through Comines. He swore that he was on the point of leaving for France. According to orders, he ought to be beheaded.

EGMONT. Let him be conducted quietly to the frontier, and there admonished that the next time he will not escape so easily.

SECRETARY. A letter from your steward. He writes that money comes in slowly; he can with difficulty send you the required sum within the week; the late disturbances have thrown everything into the greatest confusion.

EGMONT. Money must be had! It is for him to look to the means.

SECRETARY. He says he will do his utmost, and at length proposes to sue and imprison Raymond, who has been so long in your debt.

EGMONT. But he has promised to pay!

SECRETARY. The last time he fixed a fortnight himself.

EGMONT. Well, grant him another fortnight; after that he may proceed against him.

SECRETARY. You do well. His non-payment of the money proceeds not from inability, but from want of inclination. He will trifle no longer when he sees that you are in earnest. The steward further proposes to withhold, for half a month, the pensions which you allow to the old soldiers, widows, and others. In the meantime some expedient may be devised; they must make their arrangements accordingly.

EGMONT. But what arrangements can be made here? These poor people want the money more than I. He must not think of it.

SECRETARY. How then, my lord, is he to raise the required sum?

EGMONT. It his business to think of that. He was told so in a former letter.

SECRETARY. And therefore he makes these proposals.

EGMONT. They will never do; — he must think of something else. Let him suggest expedients that are admissible, and, above all, let him procure the money.

SECRETARY. I have again before me the letter from Count Oliva. Pardon my recalling it to your remembrance. Above all others, the aged count deserves a detailed reply. You proposed writing to him with your own hand. Doubtless, he loves you as a father.

EGMONT. I cannot command the time; — and of all detestable things, writing is to me the most detestable. You imitate my hand so admirably, do you write in my name. I am expecting Orange. I cannot do it; — I wish, however, that something soothing should be written to allay his fears.

SECRETARY. Just give me a notion of what you wish to communicate; I will at once draw up the answer, and lay it before you. It shall be so written that it might pass for your hand in a court of justice.

EGMONT. Give me the letter. (*After glancing over it.*) Good, honest, old man! Wert thou so cautious in thy own youth? Didst thou never mount a breach? Didst thou remain in the rear of battle at the suggestion of prudence? — What affectionate solicitude! He has, indeed, my safety and happiness at heart, but considers not that he who lives but to save his life is already dead. — Charge him not to be anxious on my account; I act as circumstances require, and shall be upon my guard. Let him use his influence

at court in my favour, and be assured of my warmest thanks.

SECRETARY. Is that all? He expects still more.

EGMONT. What can I say? If you choose to write more fully, do so. The matter turns upon a single point; he would have me live as I cannot live. That I am joyous, live fast, take matters easily, is my good fortune; nor would I exchange it for the safety of a sepulchre. My blood rebels against the Spanish mode of life, nor have I the least inclination to regulate my movements by the new and cautious measures of the court. Do I live only to think of life? Am I to forego the enjoyment of the present moment in order to secure the next? And must that in its turn be consumed in anxieties and idle fears?

SECRETARY. I entreat you, my lord, be not so harsh toward the venerable man. You are wont to be friendly toward every one. Say a kindly word to allay the anxiety of your noble friend. See how considerate he is, with what delicacy he warns you.

EGMONT. Yet he harps continually on the same string. He knows of old how I detest these admonitions. They serve only to perplex and are of no avail. What if I were a somnambulist, and trod the giddy summit of a lofty house, — were it the part of friendship to call me by my name, to warn me of my danger, to waken, to kill me? Let each choose his own path, and provide for his own safety.

SECRETARY. It may become you to be without a fear, but those who know and love you —

EGMONT. (*looking over the letter*) Then he recalls the old story of our sayings and doings one evening in the wantonness of conviviality and wine; and what conclusions and inferences were thence drawn and circulated throughout the whole kingdom! Well, we had a cap and bells embroidered on the sleeves of our servants' liveries, and afterward exchanged this sense-

less device for a bundle of arrows; — a still more dangerous symbol for those who are bent upon discovering a meaning where nothing is meant. These and similar follies were conceived and brought forth in a moment of merriment. It was at our suggestion that a noble troop, with beggars' wallets and a self-chosen nickname, with mock humility recalled the king's duty to his remembrance. It was at our suggestion, too — well, what does it signify? Is a carnival jest to be construed into high treason? Are we to be grudged the scanty, variegated rags, wherewith a youthful spirit and heated imagination would adorn the poor nakedness of life? Take life too seriously, and what is it worth? If the morning wake us to no new joys, if in the evening we have no pleasures to hope for, is it worth the trouble of dressing and undressing? Does the sun shine on me to-day that I may reflect on what happened yesterday? That I may endeavour to foresee and control what can neither be foreseen nor controlled, — the destiny of the morrow? Spare me these reflections, we will leave them to scholars and courtiers. Let them ponder and contrive, creep hither and thither, and surreptitiously achieve their ends. — If you can make use of these suggestions, without swelling your letter into a volume, it is well. Everything appears of exaggerated importance to the good old man. 'Tis thus the friend, who has long held our hand, grasps it more warmly ere he quits his hold.

SECRETARY. Pardon me, the pedestrian grows dizzy when he beholds the charioteer drive past with whirling speed.

EGMONT. Child! Child! Forbear! As if goaded by invisible spirits, the sun-steeds of time bear onward the light car of our destiny; and nothing remains for us, but, with calm self-possession, firmly to grasp the reins, and now right, now left, to steer the wheels here from the precipice and there from the rock. Whither

he is hasting, who knows? He hardly remembers whence he came!

SECRETARY. My lord! my lord!

EGMONT. I stand high, but I can and must rise yet higher. Courage, strength, and hope possess my soul. Not yet have I attained the height of my ambition; that once achieved, I want to stand firmly and without fear. Should I fall, should a thunder-clap, a storm-blast, ay, a false step of my own, precipitate me into the abyss, so be it! I shall lie there with thousands of others. I have never disdained, even for a trifling stake, to throw the bloody die with my gallant comrades; and shall I hesitate now, when all that is most precious in life is set upon the cast?

SECRETARY. Oh, my lord! you know not what you say! May Heaven protect you!

EGMONT. Collect your papers. Orange is coming. Despatch what is most urgent, that the couriers may set forth before the gates are closed. The rest may wait. Leave the count's letter till to-morrow. Fail not to visit Elvira, and greet her from me. Inform yourself concerning the regent's health. She cannot be well, though she would fain conceal it.

[*Exit* SECRETARY.

Enter ORANGE.

EGMONT. Welcome, Orange; you appear somewhat disturbed.

ORANGE. What say you to our conference with the regent?

EGMONT. I found nothing extraordinary in her manner of receiving us. I have often seen her thus before. She appeared to me to be somewhat indisposed.

ORANGE. Marked you not that she was more reserved than usual? She began by cautiously approving our conduct during the late insurrection; glanced

at the false light in which, nevertheless, it might be viewed; and finally turned the discourse to her favourite topic — that her gracious demeanour, her friendship for us Netherlanders, had never been sufficiently recognised, never appreciated as it deserved; that nothing came to a prosperous issue; that for her part she was beginning to grow weary of it; that the king must at last resolve upon other measures. Did you hear that?

EGMONT. Not all; I was thinking at the time of something else. She is a woman, good Orange, and all women expect that every one shall submit passively to their gentle yoke; that every Hercules shall lay aside his lion's skin, assume the distaff, and swell their train; and, because they are themselves peaceably inclined, imagine, forsooth, that the ferment which seizes a nation, the storm which powerful rivals excite against one another, may be allayed by one soothing word, and the most discordant elements be brought to unite in tranquil harmony at their feet. 'Tis thus with her; and since she cannot accomplish her object, why, she has no resource left but to lose her temper, to menace us with direful prospects for the future, and to threaten to take her departure.

ORANGE. Think you not that this time she will fulfil her threat?

EGMONT. Never! How often have I seen her actually prepared for the journey? Whither should she go? Being here a stadtholder, a queen, think you that she could endure to spend her days in insignificance at her brother's court, or to repair to Italy, and there drag on her existence among her old family connections?

ORANGE. She is held incapable of this determination, because you have already seen her hesitate and draw back; nevertheless, it is in her to take this step; new circumstances may impel her to the long-delayed

resolve. What if she were to depart, and the king to send another?

EGMONT. Why, he would come, and he also would have business enough upon his hands. He would arrive with vast projects and schemes to reduce all things to order, to subjugate, and combine; and to-day he would be occupied with this trifle, to-morrow with that, and the day following have to deal with some unexpected hinderance. He would spend one month in forming plans, another in mortification at their failure, and half a year would be consumed in cares for a single province. With him also time would pass, his head grow dizzy, and things hold on their ordinary course, till, instead of sailing into the open sea, according to the plan which he had previously marked out, he might thank God if, amid the tempest, he were able to keep his vessel off the rocks.

ORANGE. What if the king were advised to try an experiment?

EGMONT. Which should be —?

ORANGE. To try how the body would get on without the head.

EGMONT. What?

ORANGE. Egmont, our interests have for years weighed upon my heart; I ever stand as over a chessboard, and regard no move of my adversary as insignificant; and as men of science carefully investigate the secrets of nature, so I hold it to be the duty, ay, the very vocation of a prince, to acquaint himself with the dispositions and intentions of all parties. I have reason to fear an outbreak. The king has long acted according to certain principles; he finds that they do not lead to a prosperous issue; what more probable than that he should seek it some other way?

EGMONT. I do not believe it! When a man grows old, has attempted much, and finds that the world

cannot be made to move according to his will, he must needs grow weary of it at last.

ORANGE. One thing he has not yet attempted.

EGMONT. What?

ORANGE. To spare the people, and to put an end to the princes.

EGMONT. How many have long been haunted by this dread? There is no cause for such anxiety.

ORANGE. Once I felt anxious; gradually I became suspicious; suspicion has at length grown into certainty.

EGMONT. Has the king more faithful servants than ourselves?

ORANGE. We serve him after our own fashion; and, between ourselves, it must be confessed that we understand pretty well how to make the interests of the king square with our own.

EGMONT. And who does not? He has our duty and submission in so far as they are his due.

ORANGE. But what if he should arrogate still more, and regard as disloyalty what we esteem the maintenance of our just rights?

EGMONT. We shall know in that case how to defend ourselves. Let him assemble the Knights of the Golden Fleece; we will submit ourselves to their decision.

ORANGE. What if the sentence were to precede the trial? punishment the sentence?

EGMONT. It were an injustice of which Philip is incapable; a folly which I cannot impute either to him or to his counsellors.

ORANGE. And what if they were both unjust and foolish?

EGMONT. No, Orange, it is impossible. Who would venture to lay hands on us? The attempt to capture us were a vain and fruitless enterprise. No, they dare not raise the standard of tyranny so high. The breeze

that should waft these tidings over the land would kindle a mighty conflagration. And what object would they have in view? The king alone has no power either to judge or to condemn us; and would they attempt our lives by assassination? They cannot intend it. A terrible league would unite the entire people. Direful hate and eternal separation from the crown of Spain would, on the instant, be forcibly declared.

ORANGE. The flames would then rage over our grave, and the blood of our enemies flow, a vain oblation. Let us consider, Egmont.

EGMONT. But how could they effect this purpose?

ORANGE. Alva is on the way.

EGMONT. I do not believe it.

ORANGE. I know it.

EGMONT. The regent appeared to know nothing of it.

ORANGE. And, therefore, the stronger is my conviction. The regent will give place to him. I know his bloodthirsty disposition, and he brings an army with him.

EGMONT. To harass the provinces anew? The people will be exasperated to the last degree.

ORANGE. Their leaders will be secured.

EGMONT. No! No!

ORANGE. Let us retire, each to his province. There we can strengthen ourselves; the duke will not begin with open violence.

EGMONT. Must we not greet him when he comes?

ORANGE. We will delay.

EGMONT. What if, on his arrival, he should summon us in the king's name?

ORANGE. We will answer evasively.

EGMONT. And if he is urgent?

ORANGE. We will excuse ourselves.

EGMONT. If he insist?

ORANGE. We shall be the less disposed to come.

EGMONT. Then war is declared; and we are rebels. Do not suffer prudence to mislead you, Orange. I know it is not fear that makes you yield. Consider this step.

ORANGE. I have considered it.

EGMONT. Consider for what you are answerable if you are wrong. For the most fatal war that ever yet desolated a country. Your refusal is the signal that at once summons the provinces to arms, that justifies every cruelty for which Spain has hitherto so anxiously sought a pretext. With a single nod you will excite to the direst confusion what, with patient effort, we have so long kept in abeyance. Think of the towns, the nobles, the people; think of commerce, agriculture, trade! Realise the murder, the desolation! Calmly the soldier beholds his comrade fall beside him in the battle-field. But toward you, carried down by the stream, will float the corpses of citizens, of children, of maidens, till, aghast with horror, you shall no longer know whose cause you are defending, since you will see those for whose liberty you drew the sword perish around you. And what will be your emotions when conscience whispers, "It was for my own safety that I drew it?"

ORANGE. We are not ordinary men, Egmont. If it becomes us to sacrifice ourselves for thousands, it becomes us no less to spare ourselves for thousands.

EGMONT. He who spares himself becomes an object of suspicion even to himself.

ORANGE. He who is sure of his own motives can with confidence advance or retreat.

EGMONT. Your own act will render certain the evil that you dread.

ORANGE. Wisdom and courage alike prompt us to meet an inevitable evil.

EGMONT. When the danger is imminent the faintest hope should be taken into account.

ORANGE. We have not the smallest footing left; we are on the very brink of the precipice.

EGMONT. Is the king's favour on ground so narrow?

ORANGE. Not narrow, perhaps, but slippery.

EGMONT. By heavens! he is belied. I cannot endure that he should be so meanly thought of! He is Charles's son, and incapable of meanness.

ORANGE. Kings of course do nothing mean.

EGMONT. He should be better known.

ORANGE. Our knowledge counsels us not to wait the result of a dangerous experiment.

EGMONT. No experiment is dangerous the result of which we have the courage to meet.

ORANGE. You are irritated, Egmont.

EGMONT. I must see with my own eyes.

ORANGE. Oh, that for once you saw with mine! My friend, because your eyes are open you imagine that you see. I go! Await Alva's arrival, and God be with you! My refusal to do so may perhaps save you. The dragon may deem the prey not worth seizing if he cannot swallow us both. Perhaps he may delay in order more surely to execute his purpose; in the meantime you may see matters in their true light. But, then, be prompt! Lose not a moment! Save, — oh, save yourself! Farewell! — Let nothing escape your vigilance: — how many troops he brings with him; how he garrisons the town; what force the regent retains; how your friends are prepared. Send me tidings — Egmont —

EGMONT. What would you?

ORANGE. (*grasping his hand*) Be persuaded! Go with me!

EGMONT. What? Tears, Orange?

ORANGE. To weep for a lost friend is not unmanly.

EGMONT. You deem me lost?

ORANGE. You are lost! Consider! Only a brief respite is left you. Farewell. [*Exit.*

EGMONT. Strange that the thoughts of other men should exert such an influence over us. These fears would never have entered my mind; and this man infects me with his solicitude! Away! 'Tis a foreign drop in my blood! Kind nature cast it forth! And to erase the furrowed lines from my brow there yet remains, indeed, a friendly means.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Palace of the* REGENT.

MARGARET OF PARMA.

REGENT. I might have expected it. Ha! when we live immersed in anxiety and toil we imagine that we achieve the utmost that is possible; while he, who, from a distance, looks on and commands, believes that he requires only the possible. Oh, ye kings! I had not thought it could have galled me thus. It is so sweet to reign! — and to abdicate? I know not how my father could do so; but I will also.

MACHIAVEL *appears in the background.*

REGENT. Approach, Machiavel. I am pondering over my brother's letter.

MACHIAVEL. May I know what it contains?

REGENT. As much tender consideration for me as anxiety for his states. He extols the firmness, the industry, the fidelity, with which I have hitherto watched over the interests of his majesty in these provinces. He condoles with me that the unbridled people occasion me so much trouble. He is so thoroughly convinced of the depth of my views, so ex-

traordinarily satisfied with the prudence of my conduct, that I must almost say the letter is too politely written for a king — certainly for a brother.

MACHIAVEL. It is not the first time that he has testified to you his just satisfaction.

REGENT. But the first time that it is a mere rhetorical figure.

MACHIAVEL. I do not understand you.

REGENT. You soon will. For after this preamble he is of opinion that without soldiers, without a small army, indeed, I shall always cut a sorry figure here! We did wrong, he says, to withdraw our troops from the provinces at the remonstrance of the inhabitants; a garrison, he thinks, which shall press upon the neck of the burgher, will prevent him, by its weight, from making any lofty spring.

MACHIAVEL. It would irritate the public mind to the last degree.

REGENT. The king thinks, however, do you hear? — he thinks that a clever general, one who never listens to reason, will be able to deal promptly with all parties; — people and nobles, citizens and peasants; he therefore sends, with a powerful army, the Duke of Alva.

MACHIAVEL. Alva?

REGENT. You are surprised.

MACHIAVEL. You say he sends; he asks, doubtless, whether he should send.

REGENT. The king asks not, he sends.

MACHIAVEL. You will then have an experienced warrior in your service.

REGENT. In my service? Speak your mind, Machiavel.

MACHIAVEL. I would not anticipate you.

REGENT. And I would I could dissimulate. It wounds me — wounds me to the quick. I had rather my brother would speak his mind than attach his

signature to formal epistles drawn up by a secretary of state.

MACHIAVEL. Can they not comprehend?

REGENT. I know them both within and without. They would fain make a clean sweep; and since they cannot set about it themselves, they give their confidence to any one who comes with a besom in his hand. Oh, it seems to me as if I saw the king and his council worked upon this tapestry.

MACHIAVEL. So distinctly!

REGENT. No feature is wanting. There are good men among them. The honest Roderigo, so experienced, and so moderate, who does not aim too high, yet lets nothing sink too low; the upright Alonzo, the diligent Freneda, the steadfast Las Vargas, and others who join them when the good party are in power. But there sits the hollow-eyed Toledan, with brazen front and deep fire-glance, muttering between his teeth about womanish softness, ill-timed concession, and that women can ride trained steeds well enough, but are themselves bad masters of the horse, and the like pleasantries, which in former times I have been compelled to hear from political gentlemen.

MACHIAVEL. You have chosen good colours for your picture.

REGENT. Confess, Machiavel, among the tints from which I might select, there is no hue so livid, so jaundice-like as Alva's complexion, and the colour he is wont to paint with. He regards every one as a blasphemer or traitor; for under this head they can all be racked, impaled, quartered, and burnt at pleasure. The good I have accomplished here appears as nothing seen from a distance, just because it is good. Then he dwells on every outbreak that is past, recalls every disturbance that is quieted, and brings before the king such a picture of mutiny, sedition, and audacity, that we appear to him to be actually devouring one

another, when with us the transient explosion of a rude people has been long forgotten. Thus he conceives a cordial hatred for the poor people; he views them with horror, as beasts and monsters; looks around for fire and sword, and imagines that by such means human beings are subdued.

MACHIAVEL. You appear to me too vehement; you take the matter too seriously. Do you not remain regent?

REGENT. I am aware of that. He will bring his instructions. I am old enough in state affairs to understand how people can be supplanted without being actually deprived of office. First, he will produce a commission couched in terms somewhat obscure and equivocal; he will stretch his authority, for the power is in his hands; if I complain, he will hint at secret instructions; if I desire to see them, he will answer evasively; if I insist, he will produce a paper of totally different import; and if this fail to satisfy me, he will go on precisely as if I had never interfered. Meanwhile he will have accomplished what I dread, and will have frustrated my most cherished schemes.

MACHIAVEL. I wish I could contradict you.

REGENT. His harshness and cruelty will again arouse the turbulent spirit, which, with unspeakable patience, I have succeeded in quelling; I shall see my work destroyed before my eyes, and have besides to bear the blame of his wrong-doing.

MACHIAVEL. Await it, your Highness.

REGENT. I have sufficient self-command to remain quiet. Let him come; I will make way for him with the best grace ere he pushes me aside.

MACHIAVEL. So important a step thus suddenly?

REGENT. 'Tis harder than you imagine. He who is accustomed to rule, to hold daily in his hand the destiny of thousands, descends from the throne as into

the grave. Better thus, however, than linger a spectre among the living, and with hollow aspect endeavour to maintain a place which another has inherited, and already possesses and enjoys.

SCENE II. — CLARA'S *Dwelling.*

CLARA *and her* MOTHER.

MOTHER. Such a love as Brackenburg's I have never seen; I thought it was to be found only in romance books.

CLARA. (*walking up and down the room, humming a song*)

With love's thrilling rapture
What joy can compare!

MOTHER. He suspects thy intercourse with Egmont; and yet, if thou wouldst but treat him somewhat kindly, I do believe he would marry thee still, if thou wouldst have him.

CLARA. (*sings*)

Blissful
And tearful,
With thought-teeming brain;
Hoping
And fearing
In wavering pain;
Now shouting in triumph,
Now sunk in despair; —
With love's thrilling rapture
What joy can compare!

MOTHER. Have done with such baby nonsense!

CLARA. Nay, do not abuse it; 'tis a song of marvellous virtue. Many a time have I lulled a grown child to sleep with it.

MOTHER. Ay! Thou canst think of nothing but thy love. If only it did not put everything else out of thy head. Thou shouldst have more regard for Brackenburg, I tell thee. He may make thee happy yet some day.

CLARA. He?

MOTHER. Oh, yes! A time will come! You children live only in the present, and give no ear to our experience. Youth and happy love, all has an end; and there comes a time when one thanks God if one has any corner to creep into.

CLARA. (*shudders, and after a pause starts up*) Mother, let that time come — like death. To think of it beforehand is horrible! And if it come! If we must — then — we will bear ourselves as we may. Live without thee, Egmont! (*Weeping.*) No! It is impossible.

Enter EGMONT (*enveloped in a horseman's cloak, his hat drawn over his face*).

EGMONT. Clara!

CLARA. (*utters a cry and starts back*) Egmont! (*She hastens toward him.*) Egmont! (*She embraces and leans upon him.*) O thou good, kind, sweet Egmont! Art thou come? Art thou here, indeed!

EGMONT. Good evening, mother!

MOTHER. God save you, noble sir! My daughter has well-nigh pined to death because you have stayed away so long; she talks and sings about you the live-long day.

EGMONT. You will give me some supper?

MOTHER. You do us too much honour. If we only had anything —

CLARA. Certainly! Be quiet, mother; I have provided everything; there is something prepared. Do not betray me, mother.

MOTHER. There's little enough.

CLARA. Never mind! And then I think when he is with me I am never hungry; so he cannot, I should think, have any great appetite when I am with him.

EGMONT. Do you think so? (CLARA *stamps with her foot and turns pettishly away.*) What ails you?

CLARA. How cold you are to-day! You have not yet offered me a kiss. Why do you keep your arms enveloped in your mantle, like a new-born babe? It becomes neither a soldier nor a lover to keep his arms muffled up.

EGMONT. Sometimes, dearest, sometimes. When the soldier stands in ambush and would delude the foe, he collects his thoughts, gathers his mantle around him, and matures his plan; and a lover —

MOTHER. Will you not take a seat and make yourself comfortable? I must to the kitchen, Clara thinks of nothing when you are here. You must put up with what we have.

EGMONT. Your good-will is the best seasoning.

[*Exit* MOTHER.

CLARA. And what then is my love?

EGMONT. Just what thou wilt.

CLARA. Liken it to anything, if you have the heart.

EGMONT. But first. (*He flings aside his mantle, and appears arrayed in a magnificent dress.*)

CLARA. Oh, heavens!

EGMONT. Now my arms are free! (*Embraces her.*)

CLARA. Don't. You will spoil your dress. (*She steps back.*) How magnificent! I dare not touch you.

EGMONT. Art thou satisfied? I promised to come once arrayed in Spanish fashion.

CLARA. I had ceased to remind you of it; I thought you did not like it — ah, and the Golden Fleece!

EGMONT. Thou seest it now.

CLARA. And did the emperor really hang it round thy neck?

EGMONT. He did, my child! And this chain and Order invest the wearer with the noblest privileges. On earth I acknowledge no judge over my actions, except the grand master of the Order, with the assembled chapter of knights.

CLARA. Oh, thou mightest let the whole world sit in judgment over thee. The velvet is too splendid! and the braiding! and the embroidery! One knows not where to begin.

EGMONT. There, look thy fill.

CLARA. And the Golden Fleece! You told me its history, and said it is the symbol of everything great and precious, of everything that can be merited and won by diligence and toil. It is very precious — I may liken it to thy love; — even so I wear it next my heart; — and then —

EGMONT. What wilt thou say?

CLARA. And then again it is not like.

EGMONT. How so?

CLARA. I have not won it by diligence and toil, I have not deserved it.

EGMONT. It is otherwise in love. Thou dost deserve it because thou hast not sought it — and, for the most part, those only obtain who seek it not.

CLARA. Is it from thine own experience that thou hast learned this? Didst thou make that proud remark in reference to thyself? Thou, whom all the people love?

EGMONT. Would that I had done something for them! That I could do anything for them! It is their own good pleasure to love.

CLARA. Thou hast doubtless been with the regent to-day?

EGMONT. I have.

CLARA. Art thou upon good terms with her?

EGMONT. So it would appear. We are kind and serviceable to each other.

CLARA. And in thy heart?

EGMONT. I like her. True, we have each our own views; but that is nothing to the purpose. She is an excellent woman, knows with whom she has to deal, and would be penetrating enough were she not quite so suspicious. I give her plenty of employment, because she is always suspecting some secret motive in my conduct when, in fact, I have none.

CLARA. Really none?

EGMONT. Well, with one little exception, perhaps. All wine deposits lees in the cask in the course of time. Orange furnishes her still better entertainment, and is a perpetual riddle. He has got the credit of harbouring some secret design; and she studies his brow to discover his thoughts, and his steps, to learn in what direction they are bent.

CLARA. Does she dissemble?

EGMONT. She is regent — and do you ask?

CLARA. Pardon me; I meant to say, is she false?

EGMONT. Neither more nor less than every one who has his own objects to attain.

CLARA. I should never feel at home in the world. But she has a masculine spirit, and is another sort of woman than we housewives and seamstresses. She is great, steadfast, resolute.

EGMONT. Yes, when matters are not too much involved. For once, however, she is a little disconcerted.

CLARA. How is that?

EGMONT. She has a moustache, too, on her upper lip, and occasionally an attack of the gout. A regular Amazon.

CLARA. A majestic woman! I should dread to appear before her.

EGMONT. Yet thou art not wont to be timid! It would not be fear, only maidenly bashfulness.

(CLARA *casts down her eyes, takes his hand, and leans upon him.*)

EGMONT. I understand thee, dearest! Thou mayest raise thine eyes. (*He kisses her eyes.*)

CLARA. Let me be silent! Let me embrace thee! Let me look into thine eyes, and find there everything — hope and comfort, joy and sorrow! (*She embraces and gazes on him.*) Tell me! Oh, tell me! It seems so strange — art thou, indeed, Egmont? Count Egmont? The great Egmont, who makes so much noise in the world, who figures in the newspapers, who is the support and stay of the provinces?

EGMONT. No, Clara, I am not he.

CLARA. How?

EGMONT. Seest thou, Clara! Let me sit down! (*He seats himself, she kneels on a footstool before him, rests her arms on his knees, and looks up in his face.*) That Egmont is a morose, cold, unbending Egmont, obliged to be upon his guard, to assume now this appearance and now that; harassed, misapprehended and perplexed, when the crowd esteem him light-hearted and gay; beloved by a people who do not know their own mind; honoured and extolled by the intractable multitude; surrounded by friends in whom he dares not confide; observed by men who are on the watch to supplant him; toiling and striving, often without an object, generally without a reward. Oh, let me conceal how it fares with him, let me not speak of his feelings! But this Egmont, Clara, is calm, unreserved, happy, beloved and known by the best of hearts, which is also thoroughly known to him, and which he presses to his own with unbounded confidence and love. (*He embraces her.*) This is thy Egmont.

CLARA. So let me die! The world has no joy after this!

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *A Street.*

JETTER, CARPENTER.

JETTER. Hist! neighbour, — a word!

CARPENTER. Go your way and be quiet.

JETTER. Only one word. Is there nothing new?

CARPENTER. Nothing, except that we are anew forbidden to speak.

JETTER. How?

CARPENTER. Step here, close to this house. Take heed! Immediately on his arrival, the Duke of Alva published a decree, by which two or three, found conversing together in the streets, are, without trial, declared guilty of high treason.

JETTER. Alas!

CARPENTER. To speak of state affairs is prohibited on pain of perpetual imprisonment.

JETTER. Alas for our liberty!

CARPENTER. And no one, on pain of death, shall censure the measures of government.

JETTER. Alas for our heads!

CARPENTER. And fathers, mothers, children, kindred, friends, and servants are invited, by the promise of large rewards, to disclose what passes in the privacy of our homes, before an expressly appointed tribunal.

JETTER. Let us go home.

CARPENTER. And the obedient are promised that they shall suffer no injury either in person or estate.

JETTER. How gracious! — I felt ill at ease the moment the duke entered the town. Since then it has seemed to me as though the heavens were covered with black crape, which hangs so low that one must stoop down to avoid knocking one's head against it.

CARPENTER. And how do you like his soldiers? They are a different sort of crabs from those we have been used to.

JETTER. Faugh! It gives one the cramp at one's heart to see such a troop march down the street. As straight as tapers, with fixed look, only one step, however many there may be; and when they stand sentinel, and you pass one of them, it seems as though he would look you through and through; and he looks so stiff and morose that you fancy you see a taskmaster at every corner. They offend my sight. Our militia were merry fellows; they took liberties, stood their legs astride, their hats over their ears, they lived and let live! These fellows are like machines with a devil inside them.

CARPENTER. Were such an one to cry "Halt" and to level his musket, think you one would stand?

JETTER. I should fall dead upon the spot.

CARPENTER. Let us go home!

JETTER. No good can come of it. Farewell.

Enter SOEST.

SOEST. Friends! Neighbours!

CARPENTER. Hush! Let us go.

SOEST. Have you heard?

JETTER. Only too much!

SOEST. The regent is gone.

JETTER. Then Heaven help us.

CARPENTER. She was some stay to us.

SOEST. Her departure was sudden and secret. She could not agree with the duke; she has sent word to the nobles that she intends to return. No one believes it, however.

CARPENTER. God pardon the nobles for letting this new yoke be laid upon our necks. They might have prevented it. Our privileges are gone.

JETTER. For heaven's sake not a word about privileges. I already scent an execution; the sun will not come forth; the fogs are rank.

SOEST. Orange, too, is gone.

CARPENTER. Then are we quite deserted.

SOEST. Count Egmont is still here.

JETTER. God be thanked! Strengthen him, all ye saints, to do his utmost; he is the only one who can help us.

Enter VANSEN.

VANSEN. Have I at length found a few brave citizens who have not crept out of sight?

JETTER. Do us the favour to pass on.

VANSEN. You are not civil.

JETTER. This is no time for compliments. Does your back itch again? are your wounds already healed?

VANSEN. Ask a soldier about his wounds! Had I cared for blows, nothing good would have come of me.

JETTER. Matters may grow more serious.

VANSEN. You feel from the gathering storm a pitiful weakness in your limbs it seems.

CARPENTER. Your limbs will soon be in motion elsewhere if you do not keep quiet.

VANSEN. Poor mice! The master of the house procures a new cat, and ye are straight in despair! The difference is very trifling; we shall get on as we did before, only be quiet.

CARPENTER. You are an insolent knave.

VANSEN. Gossip! Let the duke alone. The old cat looks as though he had swallowed devils instead of mice, and could not now digest them. Let him alone, I say; he must eat, drink, and sleep like other men. I am not afraid if we only watch our opportunity. At first he makes quick work of it; by and by, however, he too will find that it is pleasanter to live in the larder, among flitches of bacon, and to rest by night,

than to entrap a few solitary mice in the granary. Go to! I know the stadtholders.

CARPENTER. What such a fellow can say with impunity! Had I said such a thing I should not hold myself safe a moment.

VANSEN. Do not make yourselves uneasy! God in heaven does not trouble himself about you poor worms, much less the regent.

JETTER. Slanderer!

VANSEN. I know some for whom it would be better if, instead of their own high spirits, they had a little tailor's blood in their veins.

CARPENTER. What mean you by that?

VANSEN. Hum! I mean the count.

JETTER. Egmont! What has he to fear?

VANSEN. I'm a poor devil, and could live a whole year round on what he loses in a single night; yet he would do well to give me his revenue for a twelvemonth, to have my head upon his shoulders for one quarter of an hour.

JETTER. You think yourself very clever; yet there is more sense in the hairs of Egmont's head than in your brains.

VANSEN. Perhaps so! Not more shrewdness, however. These gentry are the most apt to deceive themselves. He should be more chary of his confidence.

JETTER. How his tongue wags! Such a gentleman!

VANSEN. Just because he is not a tailor.

JETTER. You audacious scoundrel!

VANSEN. I only wish he had your courage in his limbs for an hour to make him uneasy, and plague and torment him till he were compelled to leave the town.

JETTER. What nonsense you talk; why, he's as safe as a star in heaven.

VANSEN. Have you ever seen one snuff itself out? Off it went!

CARPENTER. Who would dare to meddle with him?

VANSEN. Will you interfere to prevent it? Will you stir up an insurrection if he is arrested?

JETTER. Ah!

VANSEN. Will you risk your ribs for his sake?

SOEST. Eh!

VANSEN. (*mimicking them*) Eh! Oh! Ah! Run through the alphabet in your wonderment. So it is, and so it will remain. Heaven help him!

JETTER. Confound your impudence. Can such a noble, upright man have anything to fear?

VANSEN. In this world the rogue has everywhere the advantage. At the bar, he makes a fool of the judge; on the bench, he takes pleasure in convicting the accused. I have had to copy out a protocol, where the commissary was handsomely rewarded by the court, both with praise and money, because, through his cross-examination, an honest devil, against whom they had a grudge, was made out to be a rogue.

CARPENTER. Why, that again is a downright lie. What can they want to get out of a man if he is innocent?

VANSEN. Oh, you blockhead! When nothing can be worked out of a man by cross-examination they work it into him. Honesty is rash and withal somewhat presumptuous; at first they question quietly enough, and the prisoner, proud of his innocence, as they call it, comes out with much that a sensible man would keep back; then, from these answers the inquisitor proceeds to put new questions, and is on the watch for the slightest contradictions; there he fastens his line; and, let the poor devil lose his self-possession, say too much here or too little there, or, Heaven knows from what whim or other, let him withhold some trifling circumstance, or at any moment give way to fear — then we're on the right track, and I assure you no beggar-woman seeks for rags among the rubbish

with more care than such a fabricator of rogues, from trifling, crooked, disjointed, misplaced, misprinted, and concealed facts and information, acknowledged or denied, endeavours at length to patch up a scarecrow, by means of which he may at least hang his victim in effigy: and the poor devil may thank Heaven if he is in a condition to see himself hanged.

JETTER. He has a ready tongue of his own.

CARPENTER. This may serve well enough with flies. Wasps laugh at your cunning web.

VANSEN. According to the kind of spider. The tall duke, now, has just the look of your garden-spider; not the large-bellied kind — they are less dangerous; but your long-footed, meagre-bodied gentleman, that does not fatten on his diet, and whose threads are slender, indeed, but not the less tenacious.

JETTER. Egmont is knight of the Golden Fleece; who dares lay hands on him? He can be tried only by his peers, by the assembled knights of his Order. Your own foul tongue and evil conscience betray you into this nonsense.

VANSEN. Think you that I wish him ill? I like it well enough. He is an excellent gentleman. He once let off with a sound drubbing some good friends of mine who would else have been hanged. Now take yourselves off! begone, I advise you! Yonder I see the patrol again commencing their round. They do not look as if they would be willing to fraternise with us over a glass. We must wait, and bide our time. I have a couple of nieces and a tapster; if, after enjoying themselves in their company, they are not tamed, they are regular wolves.

SCENE II. — *The Palace of Eulenberg, residence of the* DUKE OF ALVA.

SILVA *and* GOMEZ (*meeting*).

SILVA. Have you executed the duke's commands?

GOMEZ. Punctually. All the day-patrols have received orders to assemble at the appointed time, at the various points that I have indicated. Meanwhile, they march as usual through the town to maintain order. Each is ignorant respecting the movements of the rest, and imagines the command to have reference to himself alone; thus in a moment the cordon can be formed, and all the avenues to the palace occupied. Know you the reason of this command?

SILVA. I am accustomed blindly to obey; and to whom can one more easily render obedience than to the duke, since the event always proves the wisdom of his commands?

GOMEZ. Well! Well! I am not surprised that you are become as reserved and monosyllabic as the duke, since you are obliged to be always about his person; to me, however, who am accustomed to the lighter service of Italy, it seems strange enough. In loyalty and obedience, I am the same old sailor as ever; but I am wont to indulge in gossip and discussion; here you are all silent, and seem as though you knew not how to enjoy yourselves. The duke, methinks, is like a brazen tower without gates, the garrison of which must be furnished with wings. Not long ago I heard him say at the table of a gay, jovial fellow that he was like a bad spirit-shop, with a brandy sign displayed, to allure idlers, vagabonds, and thieves.

SILVA. And has he not brought us hither in silence?

GOMEZ. Nothing can be said against that. Of a truth, we, who witnessed the address with which he led the troops hither out of Italy, have seen something. How he advanced warily through friends and foes; through the French, both royalists and heretics; through the Swiss and their confederates; maintained the strictest discipline, and accomplished with ease, and without the slightest hinderance, a march that was esteemed so perilous! — We have seen and learned something.

SILVA. Here, too! Is not everything as still and quiet as though there had been no disturbance?

GOMEZ. Why, as for that, it was tolerably quiet when we arrived.

SILVA. The provinces have become much more tranquil; if there is any movement now it is only among those who wish to escape; and to them, methinks, the duke will speedily close every outlet.

GOMEZ. This service cannot fail to win for him the favour of the king.

SILVA. And nothing is more expedient for us than to retain his. Should the king come hither, the duke doubtless and all whom he recommends will not go without their reward.

GOMEZ. Do you really believe then that the king will come?

SILVA. So many preparations are made that the report appears highly probable.

GOMEZ. I am not convinced, however.

SILVA. Keep your thoughts to yourself, then. For if it should not be the king's intention to come, it is at least certain that he wishes the rumour to be believed.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. Is my father not yet abroad?

SILVA. We are waiting to receive his commands.

FERDINAND. The princes will soon be here.

GOMEZ. Are they expected to-day?

FERDINAND. Orange and Egmont.

GOMEZ. (*aside to* SILVA) A light breaks in upon me.

SILVA. Well, then, say nothing about it.

Enter the DUKE OF ALVA (*as he advances the rest draw back*).

ALVA. Gomez!

GOMEZ. (*steps forward*) My lord!

ALVA. You have distributed the guards and given them your instructions?

GOMEZ. Most accurately. The day-patrols —

ALVA. Enough. Attend in the gallery. Silva will announce to you the moment when you are to draw them together, and to occupy the avenues leading to the palace. The rest you know.

GOMEZ. I do, my lord. [*Exit.*

ALVA. Silva!

SILVA. Here, my lord!

ALVA. I shall require you to manifest to-day all the qualities I have hitherto prized in you: courage, resolve, unswerving execution.

SILVA. I thank you for the opportunity of showing that your old servant is unchanged.

ALVA. The moment the princes enter my cabinet hasten to arrest Egmont's private secretary. You have made all needful preparations for securing the others who are specified?

SILVA. Rely upon us. Their doom, like a well-calculated eclipse, will overtake them with terrible certainty.

ALVA. Have you had them all narrowly watched?

SILVA. All. Egmont especially. He is the only one whose demeanour since your arrival remains unchanged. The livelong day he is now on one horse

and now on another; he invites guests as usual, is merry and entertaining at table, plays at dice, shoots, and at night steals to his mistress. The others, on the contrary, have made a manifest pause in their mode of life; they remain at home, and, from the outward aspect of their houses, you would imagine that there was a sick man within.

ALVA. To work then ere they recover in spite of us.

SILVA. I shall bring them without fail. In obedience to your commands we load them with officious honours; they are alarmed; cautiously, yet anxiously, they tender their thanks, feel that flight would be the most prudent course, yet none venture to adopt it; they hesitate, are unable to work together, while the bond which unites them prevents their acting boldly as individuals. They are anxious to withdraw themselves from suspicion, and thus only render themselves more obnoxious to it. I already contemplate with joy the successful realisation of your scheme.

ALVA. I rejoice only over what is accomplished, and not easily over that; for there ever remains ground for serious and anxious thought. Fortune is capricious; the common, the worthless, she oft-times ennobles, while she dishonours with a contemptible issue the most maturely-considered schemes. Await the arrival of the princes, then order Gomez to occupy the streets, and hasten yourself to arrest Egmont's secretary, and the others who are specified. This done, return, and announce to my son that he may bring me the tidings of the council.

SILVA. I trust this evening I shall dare to appear in your presence. (ALVA *approaches his son, who has hitherto been standing in the gallery.*) I dare not whisper it even to myself, my mind misgives me. The event will, I fear, be different from what he anticipates. I see before me spirits who, still and thoughtful, weigh in ebon scales the doom of princes and of many

thousands. Slowly the beam moves up and down; deeply the judges appear to ponder; at length one scale sinks, the other rises, breathed on by the caprice of destiny, and all is decided. [*Exit.*

ALVA. (*advancing with his son*) How did you find the town?

FERDINAND. All is quiet again. I rode, as for pastime, from street to street. Your well-distributed patrols hold Fear so tightly yoked that she does not venture even to whisper. The town resembles a plain when the lightning's glare announces the impending storm: no bird, no beast is to be seen, that is not stealing to a place of shelter.

ALVA. Has nothing further occurred?

FERDINAND. Egmont, with a few companions, rode into the market-place; we exchanged greetings; he was mounted on an unbroken charger, which excited my admiration, "Let us hasten to break in our steeds," he exclaimed; "we shall need them ere long!" He said that he should see me again to-day; he is coming here at your desire to deliberate with you.

ALVA. He will see you again.

FERDINAND. Among all the knights whom I know here he pleases me the best. I think we shall be friends.

ALVA. You are always rash and inconsiderate. I recognise in you your mother's levity, which threw her unconditionally into my arms. Appearances have already allured you precipitately into many dangerous connections.

FERDINAND. You will find me ever submissive.

ALVA. I pardon this inconsiderate kindness, this heedless gaiety, in consideration of your youthful blood. Only forget not on what mission I am sent, and what part in it I would assign to you.

FERDINAND. Admonish me, and spare me not, when you deem it needful.

ALVA. (*after a pause*) My son!

FERDINAND. Father!

ALVA. The princes will be here anon; Orange and Egmont. It is not mistrust that has withheld me till now from disclosing to you what is about to take place. They will not depart hence.

FERDINAND. What do you purpose?

ALVA. It has been resolved to arrest them. You are astonished! Learn what you have to do; the reasons you shall know when all is accomplished. Time fails now to unfold them. With you alone I wish to deliberate on the weightiest, the most secret matters; a powerful bond holds us linked together; you are dear and precious to me; on you I would bestow everything. Not the habit of obedience alone would I impress upon you; I desire also to implant within your mind the power to realise, to command, to execute; to you I would bequeath a vast inheritance, to the king a most useful servant; I would endow you with the noblest of my possessions, that you may not be ashamed to appear among your brethren.

FERDINAND. How deeply I am indebted to you for this love, which you manifest for me alone, while a whole kingdom stands in fear of you!

ALVA. Now hear what is to be done. As soon as the princes have entered, every avenue to the palace will be guarded. This duty is confided to Gomez. Silva will hasten to arrest Egmont's secretary, together with those whom we hold most in suspicion. You, meanwhile, will take the command of the guards stationed at the gates and in the courts. Above all, take care to occupy the adjoining apartment with the trustiest soldiers. Wait in the gallery till Silva returns, then bring me any unimportant paper, as a signal that his commission is executed. Remain in the antechamber till Orange retires; follow him; I will detain Egmont here as though I had some further

communication to make to him. At the end of the gallery demand Orange's sword, summon the guards, secure promptly the most dangerous man; I meanwhile will seize Egmont here.

FERDINAND. I obey, my father — for the first time with a heavy and an anxious heart.

ALVA. I pardon you; this is the first great day of your life.

Enter SILVA.

SILVA. A courier from Antwerp. Here is Orange's letter. He is not coming.

ALVA. Says the messenger so?

SILVA. No, my own heart tells me.

ALVA. In thee speaks my evil genius. (*After reading the letter he makes a sign to the two, and they retire to the gallery.* ALVA *remains alone in front of the stage.*) He comes not! Till the last moment he delays declaring himself. He dares not to come! So, then, the cautious man, contrary to all expectation, is for once cautious enough to lay aside his wonted caution. The hour moves on. Let the hand travel but a short space over the dial, and a great work is done or lost — irrevocably lost; for the opportunity can never be retrieved, nor can our intention remain concealed. Long had I maturely weighed everything, foreseen even this contingency, and firmly resolved in my own mind what in that case was to be done; and now, when I am called upon to act, I can with difficulty guard my mind from being again distracted by conflicting doubts. Is it expedient to seize the others if he escape me? Shall I delay, and suffer Egmont to elude my grasp, together with his friends, and so many others who now, and perhaps for to-day only, are in my hands? Thus destiny controls even thee — the uncontrollable! How long matured! How well prepared! How great, how admirable the plan! How nearly had hope attained

the goal! And now, at the decisive moment, thou art placed between two evils; as into a lottery thou dost grasp into the dark future; what thou hast drawn remains still unrolled, to thee unknown whether it is a prize or a blank! (*He becomes attentive, like one who hears a noise, and steps to the window.*) 'Tis he! Egmont! Did thy steed bear thee hither so lightly, and started not at the scent of blood, at the spirit with the naked sword who received thee at the gate? Dismount! Lo, now thou hast one foot in the grave! And now both! Aye, caress him, and for the last time stroke his neck for the gallant service he has rendered thee. And for me no choice is left. The delusion in which Egmont ventures here to-day cannot a second time deliver him into my hands! Hark! (FERDINAND *and* SILVA *enter hastily.*) Obey my orders. I swerve not from my purpose. I shall detain Egmont here as best I may till you bring me tidings from Silva. Then remain at hand. Thee, too, fate has robbed of the proud honour of arresting with thine own hand the king's greatest enemy. (*To* SILVA.) Be prompt! (*To* FERDINAND.) Advance to meet him. (ALVA *remains some moments alone, pacing the chamber in silence.*)

Enter EGMONT.

EGMONT. I come to learn the king's commands; to hear what service he demands from our loyalty, which remains eternally devoted to him.

ALVA. He desires above all to hear your counsel.

EGMONT. Upon what subject? Does Orange come also? I thought I should find him here.

ALVA. I regret that he fails us at this important crisis. The king desires your counsel, your opinion as to the best means of tranquillising these states. He trusts, indeed, that you will zealously coöperate with him in quelling these disturbances, and in securing to

these provinces the benefit of complete and permanent order.

EGMONT. You, my lord, should know better than I that tranquillity is already sufficiently restored, and was still more so till the appearance of fresh troops again agitated the public mind, and filled it anew with anxiety and alarm.

ALVA. You seem to intimate that it would have been more advisable if the king had not placed me in a position to interrogate you.

EGMONT. Pardon me! It is not for me to determine whether the king acted advisedly in sending the army hither, whether the might of his royal presence alone would not have operated more powerfully. The army is here, the king is not. But we should be most ungrateful were we to forget what we owe to the regent. Let it be acknowledged! By her prudence and valour, by her judicious use of authority and force, of persuasion and finesse, she pacified the insurgents, and, to the astonishment of the world, succeeded, in the course of a few months, in bringing a rebellious people back to their duty.

ALVA. I deny it not. The insurrection is quelled; and the people appear to be already forced back within the bounds of obedience. But does it not depend upon their caprice alone to overstep these bounds? Who shall prevent them from again breaking loose? Where is the power capable of restraining them? Who will be answerable to us for their future loyalty and submission? Their own good-will is the sole pledge we have.

EGMONT. And is not the good-will of a people the surest, the noblest pledge? By heaven! when can a monarch hold himself more secure, ay, against both foreign and domestic foes, than when all can stand for one, and one for all?

ALVA. You would not have us believe, however, that such is the case here at present?

EGMONT. Let the king proclaim a general pardon; he will thus tranquillise the public mind; and it will be seen how speedily loyalty and affection will return when confidence is restored.

ALVA. How! and suffer those who have insulted the majesty of the king, who have violated the sanctuaries of our religion, to go abroad unchallenged! living witnesses that enormous crimes may be perpetrated with impunity!

EGMONT. And ought not a crime of frenzy, of intoxication, to be excused rather than cruelly chastised? Especially when there is the sure hope, nay, more, where there is positive certainty that the evil will never again recur? Would not sovereigns thus be more secure? Are not those monarchs most extolled by the world and by posterity who can pardon, pity, despise an offense against their dignity? Are they not on that account likened to God himself, who is far too exalted to be assailed by every idle blasphemy?

ALVA. And, therefore, should the king contend for the honour of God and of religion, we for the authority of the king. What the supreme power disdains to avert, it is our duty to avenge. Were I to counsel, no guilty person should live to rejoice in his impunity.

EGMONT. Think you that you will be able to reach them all? Do we not daily hear that fear is driving them to and fro, and forcing them out of the land? The more wealthy will escape to other countries with their property, their children, and their friends; while the poor will carry their industrious hands to our neighbours.

ALVA. They will, if they cannot be prevented. It is on this account that the king desires counsel and aid from every prince, zealous coöperation from every stadholder; not merely a description of the present posture of affairs, or conjectures as to what might take place were events suffered to hold on their course

without interruption. To contemplate a mighty evil, to flatter oneself with hope, to trust to time, to strike a blow, like the clown in a play, so as to make a noise and appear to do something, when in fact one would fain do nothing; is not such conduct calculated to awaken a suspicion that those who act thus contemplate with satisfaction a rebellion, which they would not indeed excite, but which they are by no means unwilling to encourage?

EGMONT. (*about to break forth, restrains himself, and after a brief pause, speaks with composure*) Not every design is obvious, and many a man's design is misconstrued. It is widely rumoured, however, that the object which the king has in view is not so much to govern the provinces according to uniform and clearly defined laws, to maintain the majesty of religion, and to give his people universal peace, as unconditionally to subjugate them, to rob them of their ancient rights, to appropriate their possessions, to curtail the fair privileges of the nobles, for whose sake alone they are ready to serve him with life and limb. Religion, it is said, is merely a splendid device, behind which every dangerous design may be contrived with the greater ease; the prostrate crowds adore the sacred symbols pictured there, while behind lurks the fowler ready to ensnare them.

ALVA. This I must hear from you?

EGMONT. I speak not my own sentiments! I but repeat what is loudly rumoured, and uttered now here and now there by great and by humble, by wise men and fools. The Netherlanders fear a double yoke, and who will be surety to them for their liberty?

ALVA. Liberty! A fair word when rightly understood. What liberty would they have? What is the freedom of the most free? To do right! And in that the monarch will not hinder them. No! No! They imagine themselves enslaved when they have not the

power to injure themselves and others. Would it not be better to abdicate at once rather than rule such a people? When the country is threatened by foreign invaders, the burghers, occupied only with their immediate interests, bestow no thought upon the advancing foe, and when the king requires their aid, they quarrel among themselves, and thus, as it were, conspire with the enemy. Far better is it to circumscribe their power, to control and guide them for their good, as children are controlled and guided. Trust me, a people grows neither old nor wise, a people remains always in its infancy.

EGMONT. How rarely does a king attain wisdom! And is it not fit that the many should confide their interests to the many rather than to the one? And not even to the one, but to the few servants of the one, men who have grown old under the eyes of their master. To grow wise, it seems, is the exclusive privilege of these favoured individuals.

ALVA. Perhaps for the very reason that they are not left to themselves.

EGMONT. And therefore they would fain leave no one else to his own guidance. Let them do what they like, however; I have replied to your questions, and I repeat, the measures you propose will never succeed! They cannot succeed! I know my countrymen. They are men worthy to tread God's earth; each complete in himself, a little king, steadfast, active, capable, loyal, attached to ancient customs. It may be difficult to win their confidence, but it is easy to retain it. Firm and unbending! They may be crushed but not subdued.

ALVA. (*who during this speech has looked round several times*) Would you venture to repeat what you have uttered in the king's presence?

EGMONT. It were the worse, if in his presence I were restrained by fear! The better for him and for

his people if he inspired me with confidence, if he encouraged me to give yet freer utterance to my thoughts.

ALVA. What is profitable I can listen to as well as he.

EGMONT. I would say to him — 'Tis easy for the shepherd to drive before him a flock of sheep; the ox draws the plough without opposition; but if you would ride the noble steed, you must study his thoughts, you must require nothing unreasonable, nor unreasonably, from him. The burgher desires to retain his ancient constitution; to be governed by his own countrymen; and why? Because he knows in that case how he shall be ruled, because he can rely upon their disinterestedness, upon their sympathy with his fate.

ALVA. And ought not the regent to be empowered to alter these ancient usages? Should not this constitute his fairest privilege? What is permanent in this world? And shall the constitution of a state alone remain unchanged? Must not every relation alter in the course of time, and, on that very account, an ancient constitution become the source of a thousand evils, because not adapted to the present condition of the people? These ancient rights afford, doubtless, convenient loopholes, through which the crafty and the powerful may creep, and wherein they may lie concealed to the injury of the people and of the entire community; and it is on this account, I fear, that they are held in such high esteem.

EGMONT. And these arbitrary changes, these unlimited encroachments of the supreme power, are they not indications that one will permit himself to do what is forbidden to thousands? The monarch would alone be free, that he may have it in his power to gratify his every wish, to realise his every thought. And though we should confide in him as a good and virtu-

ous sovereign, will he be answerable to us for his successors? That none who come after him shall rule without consideration, without forbearance! And who would deliver us from absolute caprice, should he send hither his servants, his minions, who, without knowledge of the country and its requirements, should govern according to their own good pleasure, meet with no opposition, and know themselves exempt from all responsibility?

ALVA. (*who has meanwhile again looked round*) There is nothing more natural than that a king should choose to retain the power in his own hands, and that he should select as the instruments of his authority those who best understand him, who desire to understand him, and who will unconditionally execute his will.

EGMONT. And just as natural is it that the burgher should prefer being governed by one born and reared in the same land, whose notions of right and wrong are in harmony with his own, and whom he can regard as his brother.

ALVA. And yet the noble, methinks, has shared rather unequally with these brethren of his.

EGMONT. That took place centuries ago, and is now submitted to without envy. But should new men, whose presence is not needed in the country, be sent to enrich themselves a second time at the cost of the nation; should the people see themselves exposed to their bold, unscrupulous rapacity, it would excite a ferment that would not soon be quelled.

ALVA. You utter words to which I ought not to listen; — I, too, am a foreigner.

EGMONT. That they are spoken in your presence is a sufficient proof that they have no reference to you.

ALVA. Be that as it may, I would rather not hear them from you. The king sent me here in the hope that I should obtain the support of the nobles. The king wills, and will have his will obeyed. After pro-

found deliberation, the king at length discerns what course will best promote the welfare of the people; matters cannot be permitted to go on as heretofore; it is the king's intention to limit their power for their own good; if necessary, to force upon them their salvation: to sacrifice the more dangerous burghers in order that the rest may find repose, and enjoy in peace the blessing of a wise government. This is his resolve; this I am commissioned to announce to the nobles; and in his name I require from them advice, not as to the course to be pursued — on that he is resolved — but as to the best means of carrying his purpose into effect.

EGMONT. Your words, alas! justify the fears of the people, the universal fear! The king then has resolved as no sovereign ought to resolve. In order to govern his subjects more easily, he would crush, subvert, nay, ruthlessly destroy, their strength, their spirit, and their self-respect! He would violate the inmost core of their individuality, doubtless with the view of promoting their happiness. He would annihilate them, that they may assume a new, a different form. Oh! if his purpose be good, he is fatally misguided! It is not the king whom we resist; — we but place ourselves in the way of the monarch, who, unhappily, is about to take the first rash step in a wrong direction.

ALVA. Such being your sentiments, it were a vain attempt for us to endeavour to agree. You must, indeed, think poorly of the king, and contemptibly of his counsellors, if you imagine that everything has not already been thought of and maturely weighed. I have no commission a second time to balance conflicting arguments. From these people I demand submission; — and from you, their leaders and princes, I demand counsel and support as pledges of this unconditional duty.

EGMONT. Demand our heads, and your object is attained; to a noble soul it must be indifferent whether he stoop his neck to such a yoke or lay it upon the block. I have spoken much to little purpose. I have agitated the air, but accomplished nothing.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. Pardon my intrusion. Here is a letter, the bearer of which urgently demands an answer.

ALVA. Allow me to peruse its contents. (*Steps aside.*)

FERDINAND. (*to* EGMONT) 'Tis a noble steed that your people have brought to carry you away.

EGMONT. I have seen worse. I have had him some time; I think of parting with him. If he pleases you we shall probably soon agree as to the price.

FERDINAND. We will think about it. (ALVA *motions to his son, who retires to the background.*)

EGMONT. Farewell! Allow me to retire; for, by heaven, I know not what more I can say.

ALVA. Fortunately for you, chance prevents you from making a fuller disclosure of your sentiments. You incautiously lay bare the recesses of your heart, and your own lips furnish evidence against you more fatal than could be produced by your bitterest adversary.

EGMONT. This reproach disturbs me not. I know my own heart; I know with what honest zeal I am devoted to the king; I know that my allegiance is more true than that of many who, in his service, seek only to serve themselves. I regret that our discussion should terminate so unsatisfactorily, and trust that, in spite of our opposing views, the service of the king, our master, and the welfare of our country, may speedily unite us; another conference, the presence of the princes who to-day are absent, may, perchance,

in a more propitious moment, accomplish what at present appears impossible. In this hope I take my leave.

ALVA. (*who at the same time makes a sign to* FERDINAND) Hold, Egmont! — Your sword! — (*The centre door opens and discloses the gallery, which is occupied with guards, who remain motionless.*)

EGMONT. (*after a pause of astonishment*) This was the intention? For this thou hast summoned me? (*Grasping his sword as if to defend himself.*) Am I then weaponless?

ALVA. The king commands. Thou art my prisoner. (*At the same time guards enter from both sides.*)

EGMONT. (*after a pause*) The king? — Orange! Orange! (*After a pause, resigning his sword.*) Take it! It has been employed far oftener in defending the cause of my king than in protecting this breast. (*He retires by the centre door, followed by the guard and* ALVA'S *son.* ALVA *remains standing while the curtain falls.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A Street. Twilight.*

CLARA, BRACKENBURG, BURGHERS.

BRACKENBURG. Dearest, for heaven's sake, what wouldst thou do?

CLARA. Come with me, Brackenburg! Thou canst not know the people, we are certain to rescue him; for what can equal their love for him? Each feels, I could swear it, the burning desire to deliver him, to avert danger from a life so precious, and to restore freedom to the most free. Come! A voice only is wanting to call them together. In their souls the memory is still fresh of all they owe him, and well

they know that his mighty arm alone shields them from destruction. For his sake, for their own sake, they must peril everything. And what do we peril? At most our lives, which, if he perish, are not worth preserving.

BRACKENBURG. Unhappy girl! Thou seest not the power that holds us fettered as with bands of iron.

CLARA. To me it does not appear invincible. Let us not lose time in idle words. Here comes some of our old, honest, valiant burghers! Hark ye, friends! Neighbours! Hark!—Say, how fares it with Egmont?

CARPENTER. What does the girl want? Tell her to hold her peace.

CLARA. Step nearer, that we may speak low, till we are united and more strong. Not a moment is to be lost. Audacious tyranny, that dared to fetter him, already lifts the dagger against his life. Oh, my friends! With the advancing twilight my anxiety grows more intense. I dread this night. Come! Let us disperse; let us hasten from quarter to quarter, and call out the burghers. Let every one grasp his ancient weapons. In the market-place we meet again, and every one will be carried onward by our gathering stream. The enemy will see themselves surrounded, overwhelmed, and be compelled to yield. How can a handful of slaves resist us? And he will return among us, he will see himself rescued, and can for once thank us, us, who are already so deeply in his debt. He will behold, perchance, ay, doubtless, he will again behold the morn's red dawn in the free heavens.

CARPENTER. What ails thee, maiden?

CLARA. Can ye misunderstand me? I speak of the count! I speak of Egmont!

JETTER. Speak not the name! 'tis deadly.

CLARA. Not speak his name? How? Not Egmont's name? Is it not on every tongue? Where

stands it not inscribed? Often have I read it emblazoned with all its letters among these stars. Not utter it? What mean ye? Friends! good, kind neighbours, ye are dreaming; collect yourselves. Gaze not upon me with those fixed and anxious looks! Cast not such timid glances on every side! I but give utterance to the wish of all. Is not my voice the voice of your own hearts? Who, in this fearful night, ere he seeks his restless couch, but on bended knee will, in earnest prayer, seek to wrest his life as a cherished boon from heaven? Ask each other! Let each ask his own heart! And who but exclaims with me, — "Egmont's liberty, or death!"

JETTER. God help us! This is a sad business.

CLARA. Stay! Stay! Shrink not away at the sound of his name, to meet whom ye were wont to press forward so joyously! — When rumour announced his approach, when the cry arose, "Egmont comes! He comes from Ghent!" — then happy, indeed, were those citizens who dwelt in the streets through which he was to pass. And when the neighing of his steed was heard, did not every one throw aside his work while a ray of hope and joy, like a sunbeam from his countenance, stole over the toil-worn faces that peered from every window? Then, as ye stood in the doorways, ye would lift up your children in your arms, and, pointing to him, exclaim: "See, that is Egmont, he who towers above the rest! 'Tis from him that ye must look for better times than those your poor fathers have known." Let not your children inquire at some future day, "Where is he? Where are the better times ye promised us?" — Thus we waste the time in idle words! do nothing, — betray him.

SOEST. Shame on thee, Brackenburg! Let her not run on thus! Prevent the mischief!

BRACKENBURG. Dear Clara! Let us go! What will your mother say? Perchance —

CLARA. Thinkest thou I am a child, or frantic? What avails perchance?—With no vain hope canst thou hide from me this dreadful certainty. . . . Ye shall hear me and ye will: for I see it, ye are overwhelmed, ye cannot hearken to the voice of your own hearts. Through the present peril cast but one glance into the past,—the recent past. Send your thoughts forward into the future. Could ye live, would ye live, were he to perish? With him expires the last breath of freedom. What was he not to you? For whose sake did he expose himself to the direst perils? His blood flowed, his wounds were healed for you alone. The mighty spirit that upheld you all a dungeon now confines, while the horrors of secret murder are hovering around. Perhaps he thinks of you — perhaps he hopes in you,—he who has been accustomed only to grant favours to others and to fulfil their prayers.

CARPENTER. Come, gossip.

CLARA. I have neither the arms nor the vigour of a man; but I have that which ye all lack — courage and contempt of danger. Oh, that my breath could kindle your souls! That, pressing you to this bosom, I could arouse and animate you! Come! I will march in your midst!—As a waving banner, though weaponless, leads on a gallant army of warriors, so shall my spirit hover, like a flame, over your ranks, while love and courage shall unite the dispersed and wavering multitude into a terrible host.

JETTER. Take her away; I pity her, poor thing!

[*Exeunt* BURGHERS.

BRACKENBURG. Clara! Seest thou not where we are?

CLARA. Where! Under the dome of heaven, which has so often seemed to arch itself more gloriously as the noble Egmont passed beneath it. From these windows I have seen them look forth, four or five heads one above the other; at these doors the cowards have

stood, bowing and scraping, if he but chanced to look down upon them! Oh, how dear they were to me when they honoured him. Had he been a tyrant they might have turned with indifference from his fall! But they loved him! Oh, ye hands so prompt to wave caps in his honour, can ye not grasp a sword? Brackenburg, and we? — do we chide them? These arms that have so often embraced him, what do they for him now? Stratagem has accomplished so much in the world. Thou knowest the ancient castle, every passage, every secret way. Nothing is impossible, — suggest some plan —

BRACKENBURG. That we might go home!

CLARA. Well!

BRACKENBURG. There, at the corner, I see Alva's guard; let the voice of reason penetrate to thy heart! Dost thou deem me a coward? Dost thou doubt that for thy sake I would peril my life? Here we are both mad, I as well as thou. Dost thou not perceive that thy scheme is impracticable? Oh, be calm! Thou art beside thyself.

CLARA. Beside myself! Horrible! You, Brackenburg, are beside yourself. When you hailed the hero with loud acclaim, called him your friend, your hope, your refuge, shouted vivats as he passed; — then I stood in my corner, half opened the window, concealed myself while I listened, and my heart beat higher than yours who greeted him so loudly. Now it again beats higher! In the hour of peril you conceal yourselves, deny him, and feel not, that if he perish, you are lost.

BRACKENBURG. Come home!

CLARA. Home?

BRACKENBURG. Recollect thyself! Look around thee! These are the streets in which thou wert wont to appear only on the Sabbath-day, when thou didst walk modestly to church; where, over-decorous perhaps thou wert displeased if I but joined thee with a kindly

greeting. And now thou dost stand, speak, and act before the eyes of the whole world. Recollect thyself, love! How can this avail us?

CLARA. Home! Yes, I remember. Come, Brackenburg, let us go home! Knowest thou where my home lies? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *A Prison.*

Lighted by a lamp, a couch in the background.

EGMONT. (*alone*) Old friend! Ever faithful sleep, dost thou, too, forsake me like my other friends? How thou wert wont of yore to descend unsought upon my free brow, cooling my temples as with a myrtle wreath of love! Amidst the din of battle, on the waves of life, I rested in thine arms, breathing lightly as a growing boy. When tempests whistled through the leaves and boughs, when the summits of the lofty trees swung creaking in the blast, the inmost core of my heart remained unmoved. What agitates thee now? What shakes thy firm and steadfast mind? I feel it; 'tis the sound of the murderous axe gnawing at thy root. Yet I stand erect, but an inward shudder runs through my frame. Yes, it prevails, this treacherous power; it undermines the firm, the lofty stem, and ere the bark withers, thy verdant crown falls crashing to the earth.

Yet wherefore now, thou who hast so often chased the weightiest cares like bubbles from thy brow, wherefore canst thou not dissipate this dire foreboding which incessantly haunts thee in a thousand different shapes? Since when hast thou trembled at the approach of death, amid whose varying forms thou wert wont calmly to dwell, as with the other shapes of this familiar earth? But 'tis not he, the sudden foe, to encounter whom the sound bosom emulously pants;

— 'tis the dungeon, emblem of the grave, revolting alike to the hero and the coward. How intolerable I used to feel it, in the stately hall, girt round by gloomy walls, when, seated on my cushioned chair in the solemn assembly of the princes, questions which scarcely required deliberation were overlaid with endless discussions, while the rafters of the ceiling seemed to stifle and oppress me. Then I would hurry forth as soon as possible, fling myself upon my horse with deep-drawn breath, and away to the wide champaign, man's natural element, where, exhaling from the earth, nature's richest treasures are poured forth around us, while, from the wide heavens, the stars shed down their blessings through the still air; where, like earth-born giants, we spring aloft, invigorated by our mother's touch; where our entire humanity and our human desires throb in every vein; where the desire to press forward, to vanquish, to snatch, to use his clenched fist, to possess, to conquer, glows through the soul of the young hunter; where the warrior, with rapid stride, assumes his inborn right to dominion over the world, and, with terrible liberty, sweeps like a desolating hail-storm over field and grove, knowing no boundaries traced by the hand of man.

Thou art but a shadow, a dream of the happiness I so long possessed; where has treacherous Fate conducted thee? Did she deny thee to meet the rapid stroke of never-shunned death in the open face of day only to prepare for thee a foretaste of the grave, in the midst of this loathsome corruption? How revoltingly its rank odour exhales from these damp stones! Life stagnates, and my foot shrinks from the couch as from the grave.

O care, care! Thou who dost begin prematurely the work of murder, forbear; — since when has Egmont been alone, so utterly alone in the world? 'Tis doubt renders thee insensible, not happiness. The justice of

the king, in which through life thou hast confided, the friendship of the regent, which, thou may'st confess it, was akin to love, — have these suddenly vanished, like a meteor of the night, and left thee alone upon thy gloomy path? Will not Orange, at the head of thy friends, contrive some daring scheme? Will not the people assemble, and with gathering might attempt the rescue of their faithful friend?

Ye walls, which thus gird me round, separate me not from the well-intentioned zeal of so many kindly souls. And may the courage with which my glance was wont to inspire them now return again from their hearts to mine. Yes! they assemble in thousands! they come! they stand beside me! their pious wish rises urgently to heaven, and implores a miracle; and if no angel stoops for my deliverance, I see them grasp eagerly their lance and sword. The gates are forced, the bolts are riven, the walls fall beneath their conquering hands, and Egmont advances, joyously, to hail the freedom of the rising morn. How many well-known faces receive me with loud acclaim! O Clara! wert thou a man I should see thee here the very first, and thank thee for that which it is galling to owe even to a king — liberty.

Scene III. — *Clara's House.*

Clara. (*enters from her chamber with a lamp and a glass of water; she places the glass upon the table and steps to the window*) Brackenburg, is it you? What noise was that? No one yet? No one! I will set the lamp in the window, that he may see that I am still awake, that I still watch for him. He promised me tidings. Tidings? horrible certainty! — Egmont condemned! — what tribunal has the right to summon him? — And they dare to condemn him! — Does the

king condemn him, or the duke? And the regent withdraws herself! Orange hesitates, and all his friends? — Is this the world, of whose fickleness and treachery I have heard so much, and as yet experienced nothing? Is this the world? — Who could be so base as to bear malice against one so dear? Could villainy itself be audacious enough to overwhelm with sudden destruction the object of a nation's homage? Yet so it is — it is — O Egmont, I held thee safe before God and man, safe as in my arms! What was I to thee? Thou hast called me thine, my whole being was devoted to thee. What am I now? In vain I stretch out my hand to the toils that environ thee. Thou helpless and I free! — Here is the key that unlocks my chamber door. My going out and my coming in depend upon my own caprice; yet, alas, to aid thee I am powerless! — Oh, bind me that I may not despair; hurl me into the deepest dungeon, that I may dash my head against the damp walls, groan for freedom, and dream how I would rescue him if fetters did not hold me bound. — Now I am free, and in freedom lies the anguish of impotence. — Conscious of my own existence, yet unable to stir a limb in his behalf, alas! even this insignificant portion of thy being, thy Clara, is, like thee, a captive, and, separated from thee, consumes her expiring energies in the agonies of death. — I hear a stealthy step, — a cough — Brackenburg, — 'tis he! — Kind, unhappy man, thy destiny remains ever the same; thy love opens to thee the door at night, alas! to what a doleful meeting. (*Enter* BRACKENBURG.) Thou comest so pale, so terrified! Brackenburg! What is it?

BRACKENBURG. I have sought thee through perils and circuitous paths. The principal streets are occupied with troops; — through lanes and byways have I stolen to thee!

CLARA. Tell me, how is it?

BRACKENBURG. (*seating himself*) O Clara, let me weep. I loved him not. He was the rich man who lured to better pasture the poor man's solitary lamb. I have never cursed him. God has created me with a true and tender heart. My life was consumed in anguish, and each day I hoped would end my misery.

CLARA. Let that be forgotten, Brackenburg! Forget thyself. Speak to me of him! Is it true? Is he condemned?

BRACKENBURG. He is! I know it.

CLARA. And still lives?

BRACKENBURG. Yes, he still lives.

CLARA. How canst thou be sure of that? Tyranny murders the hero in the night! His blood flows concealed from every eye. The people, stunned and bewildered, lie buried in sleep, dream of deliverance, dream of the fulfilment of their impotent wishes, while, indignant at our supineness, his spirit abandons the world. He is no more! Deceive me not! deceive not thyself!

BRACKENBURG. No, — he lives! and the Spaniards, alas, are preparing for the people, on whom they are about to trample, a terrible spectacle, in order to crush for ever, by a violent blow, each heart that yet pants for freedom.

CLARA. Proceed! Calmly pronounce my death-warrant also! Near and more near I approach that blessed land, and already from those realms of peace I feel the breath of consolation. Say on.

BRACKENBURG. From casual words, dropped here and there by the guards, I learned that secretly in the market-place they were preparing some terrible spectacle. Through byways and familiar lanes I stole to my cousin's house, and from a back window looked out upon the market-place. Torches waved to and fro, in the hands of a wide circle of Spanish soldiers. I sharpened my unaccustomed sight, and out of the

darkness there arose before me a scaffold, black, spacious and lofty! The sight filled me with horror. Several persons were employed in covering with black cloth such portions of the woodwork as yet remained white and visible. The steps were covered last, also with black; — I saw it all. They seemed preparing for the celebration of some horrible sacrifice. A white crucifix, that shone like silver through the night, was raised on one side. As I gazed, the terrible conviction strengthened in my mind. Scattered torches still gleamed here and there; gradually they flickered and went out. Suddenly the hideous birth of night returned into its mother's womb.

CLARA. Hush, Brackenburg! Be still! Let this veil rest upon my soul. The spectres are vanished; and thou, gentle night, lend thy mantle to the inwardly fermenting earth; she will no longer endure the loathsome burden, shuddering, she rends open her yawning chasms, and with a crash swallows the murderous scaffold. And that God, whom in their rage they have insulted, sends down his angel from on high; at the hallowed touch of the messenger bolts and bars fly back; he pours around our friend a mild radiance, and leads him gently through the night to liberty. My path leads also through the darkness to meet him.

BRACKENBURG. (*detaining her*) My child, whither wouldst thou go? What wouldst thou do?

CLARA. Softly, my friend, lest some one should awake! Lest we should awake ourselves! Knowest thou this phial, Brackenburg? I took it from thee once in jest, when thou, as was thy wont, didst threaten, in thy impatience, to end thy days. And now, my friend —

BRACKENBURG. In the name of all the saints!

CLARA. Thou canst not hinder me. Death is my portion! Grudge me not the quiet and easy death

which thou hadst prepared for thyself. Give me thine hand! At the moment when I unclose that dismal portal through which there is no return, I may tell thee, with this pressure of the hand, how sincerely I have loved, how deeply I have pitied thee. My brother died young; I chose thee to fill his place; thy heart rebelled, thou didst torment thyself and me, demanding, with ever-increasing fervour, that which fate had not destined for thee. Forgive me and farewell! Let me call thee brother. 'Tis a name that embraces many names. Receive, with a true heart, the last fair token of the departing spirit — take this kiss. Death unites all, Brackenburg — us too it will unite!

BRACKENBURG. Let me then die with thee! Share it! oh, share it! There is enough to extinguish two lives!

CLARA. Hold! Thou must live, thou canst live. Support my mother, who, without thee, would be a prey to want. Be to her what I can no longer be; live together, and weep for me. Weep for our country, and for him who could alone have upheld it. The present generation must still endure this bitter woe; vengeance itself could not obliterate it. Poor souls, live on, through this gap in time, which is time no longer. To-day the world suddenly stands still, its course is arrested, and my pulse will beat but for a few minutes longer. Farewell!

BRACKENBURG. Oh, live with us, as we live only for thy sake! In taking thine own life thou wilt take ours also; still live and suffer. We will stand by thee; nothing shall sever us from thy side, and love, with ever-watchful solicitude, shall prepare for thee the sweetest consolation in its loving arms. Be ours! Ours! I dare not say, mine.

CLARA. Hush, Brackenburg! Thou feelest not what chord thou touchest. Where hope appears to thee, I see only despair.

BRACKENBURG. Share hope with the living! Pause on the brink of the precipice, cast one glance into the gulf below, and then look back on us.

CLARA. I have conquered; call me not back to the struggle.

BRACKENBURG. Thou art stunned; enveloped in night, thou seekest the abyss. Every light is not yet extinguished, yet many days! —

CLARA. Alas! Alas! Cruelly thou dost rend the veil from before mine eyes. Yes, the day will dawn! Despite its misty shroud it needs must dawn. Timidly the burgher gazes from his window, night leaves behind an ebon speck; he looks, and the scaffold looms fearfully in the morning light. With reawakened anguish the desecrated image of the Saviour lifts to the Father its imploring eyes. The sun veils his beams, he will not mark the hero's death-hour. Slowly the fingers go their round — one hour strikes after another — hold! Now is the time. The thought of the morning scares me into the grave. (*She goes to the window as if to look out, and drinks secretly.*)

BRACKENBURG. Clara! Clara!

CLARA. (*goes to the table and drinks water*) Here is the remainder. I invite thee not to follow me. Do as thou wilt: farewell. Extinguish this lamp silently and without delay; I am going to rest. Steal quietly away, close the door after thee. Be still! Wake not my mother! Go, save thyself, if thou wouldst not be taken for my murderer. [*Exit.*

BRACKENBURG. She leaves me for the last time as she has ever done. What human soul could conceive how cruelly she lacerates the heart that loves her. She leaves me to myself, leaves me to choose between life and death, and both are alike hateful to me. To die alone! Weep, ye tender souls! Fate has no sadder doom than mine. She shares with me the death-potion, yet sends me from her side! She draws

me after her, yet thrusts me back into life! Oh, Egmont, how enviable a lot falls to thee! She goes before thee! The crown of victory from her hand is thine, she brings all heaven to meet thee! — And shall I follow? Again to stand aloof? To carry the inextinguishable jealousy even to yon distant realms? Earth is no longer a tarrying place for thee, and hell and heaven both offer equal torture. Now welcome to the wretched the dread hand of annihilation. [*Exit.*

[*The scene remains some time unchanged. Music sounds, indicating* CLARA'S *death; the lamp, which* BRACKENBURG *had forgotten to extinguish, flares up once or twice, and then suddenly expires. The scene changes to*

SCENE IV. — *A Prison.*

EGMONT *is discovered sleeping on a couch. A rustling of keys is heard; the door opens; servants enter with torches;* FERDINAND *and* SILVA *follow, accompanied by soldiers;* EGMONT *starts from his sleep.*

EGMONT. Who are ye that thus rudely banish slumber from my eyes? What mean these vague and insolent glances? Why this fearful procession? With what dream of horror come ye to delude my half-awakened soul?

SILVA. The duke sends us to announce your sentence.

EGMONT. Do you also bring the headsman who is to execute it?

SILVA. Listen, and you will know the doom that awaits you.

EGMONT. It is in keeping with the rest of your infamous proceedings. Hatched in night and in night

achieved, so would this audacious act of injustice shroud itself from observation! — Step boldly forth, thou who dost bear the sword concealed beneath thy mantle; here is my head, the freest ever severed by tyranny from the trunk.

SILVA. You err! The righteous judges who have condemned you will not conceal their sentence from the light of day.

EGMONT. Then does their audacity exceed all imagination and belief.

SILVA. (*takes the sentence from an attendant, unfolds it, and reads*) "In the king's name, and invested by his Majesty with authority to judge all his subjects of whatever rank, not excepting the knights of the Golden Fleece, we declare — "

EGMONT. Can the king transfer that authority?

SILVA. "We declare, after a strict and legal investigation, thee, Henry, Count Egmont, Prince of Gaure, guilty of high treason, and pronounce thy sentence: — That at early dawn thou be led from this prison to the market-place, and that there, in sight of the people, and as a warning to all traitors, thou with the sword be brought from life to death. Given at Brussels." (*Date and year so indistinctly read as to be imperfectly heard by the audience.*) "Ferdinand, Duke of Alva, President of the Tribunal of Twelve." Thou knowest now thy doom. Brief time remains for the impending stroke, to arrange thy affairs, and to take leave of thy friends.

[*Exit* SILVA *with followers.* FERDINAND *remains with two torch-bearers. The stage is dimly lighted.*

EGMONT. (*stands for a time as if buried in thought, and allows* SILVA *to retire without looking round. He imagines himself alone, and, on raising his eyes, beholds* ALVA'S *son*) Thou tarriest here? Wouldst thou by thy presence augment my amazement, my horror? Wouldst thou carry to thy father the welcome tidings

that in unmanly fashion I despair. Go! Tell him that he deceives neither the world nor me. At first it will be whispered cautiously behind his back, then spoken more and more loudly, and when at some future day the ambitious man descends from his proud eminence, a thousand voices will proclaim — that 'twas not the welfare of the state, not the honour of the king, not the tranquillity of the provinces, that brought him hither. For his own selfish ends he, the warrior, has counselled war, that in war the value of his services might be enhanced. He has excited this monstrous insurrection that his presence might be deemed necessary in order to quell it. And I fall a victim to his mean hatred, his contemptible envy. Yes, I know it, dying and mortally wounded I may utter it; long has the proud man envied me, long has he meditated and planned my ruin.

Even then, when still young, we played at dice together, and the heaps of gold, one after the other, passed rapidly from his side to mine; he would look on with affected composure, while inwardly consumed with rage, more at my success than at his own loss. Well do I remember the fiery glance, the treacherous pallor that overspread his features, when, at a public festival, we shot for a wager before assembled thousands. He challenged me, and both nations stood by; Spaniards and Netherlanders wagered on either side; I was the victor; his ball missed, mine hit the mark, and the air was rent by acclamations from my friends. His shot now hits me. Tell him that I know this, that I know him, that the world despises every trophy that a paltry spirit erects for itself by base and surreptitious arts. And thou! If it be possible for a son to swerve from the manners of his father, practise shame betimes, while thou art compelled to feel shame for him whom thou wouldst fain revere with thy whole heart.

FERDINAND. I listen without interrupting thee! Thy reproaches fall like blows upon a helmet. I feel the shock, but I am armed. They strike, they wound me not; I am sensible only to the anguish that lacerates my heart. Alas! Alas! Have I lived to witness such a scene? Am I sent hither to behold a spectacle like this?

EGMONT. Dost thou break out into lamentations? What moves, what agitates thee thus? Is it a late remorse at having lent thyself to this infamous conspiracy? Thou art so young, thy exterior is so prepossessing. Thy demeanour towards me was so friendly, so unreserved! So long as I beheld thee, I was reconciled with thy father; and crafty, ay, more crafty than he, thou hast lured me into the toils. Thou art the wretch! The monster! Whoso confides in him does so at his own peril; but who could apprehend danger in trusting thee? Go! Go! rob me not of the few moments that are left to me! Go, that I may collect my thoughts, forget the world, and first of all thee!

FERDINAND. What can I say? I stand and gaze on thee, yet see thee not; I am scarcely conscious of my own existence. Shall I seek to excuse myself? Shall I assure thee that it was not till the last moment that I was made aware of my father's intentions? That I acted as a constrained, a passive instrument of his will? What signifies now the opinion thou mayest entertain of me? Thou art lost; and I, miserable wretch, stand here only to assure thee of it, only to lament thy doom.

EGMONT. What strange voice, what unexpected consolation comes thus to cheer my passage to the grave? Thou, the son of my first, of almost my only enemy, thou dost pity me, thou art not associated with my murderers? Speak! In what light must I regard thee?

FERDINAND. Cruel father! Yes, I recognise thy nature in this command. Thou didst know my heart, my disposition, which thou hast so often censured as the inheritance of a tender-hearted mother. To mould me into thine own likeness thou hast sent me hither. Thou dost compel me to behold this man on the verge of the yawning grave, in the grasp of an arbitrary doom, that I may experience the profoundest anguish; that thus, rendered callous to every fate, I may henceforth meet every event with a heart unmoved.

EGMONT. I am amazed! Be calm! Act, speak like a man.

FERDINAND. Oh, that I were a woman! That they might say — what moves, what agitates thee? Tell me of a greater, a more monstrous crime, make me the spectator of a more direful deed; I will thank thee, I will say: this was nothing.

EGMONT. Thou dost forget thyself. Consider where thou art!

FERDINAND. Let this passion rage, let me give vent to my anguish! I will not seem composed when my whole inner being is convulsed. Thee must I behold here? Thee? It is horrible! Thou understandest me not! How shouldst thou understand me? Egmont! Egmont! (*Falling on his neck.*)

EGMONT. Explain this mystery.

FERDINAND. It is no mystery.

EGMONT. Why art thou moved so deeply by the fate of a stranger?

FERDINAND. Not a stranger! Thou art no stranger to me. Thy name it was that, even from my boyhood, shone before me like a star in heaven! How often have I made inquiries concerning thee, and listened to the story of thy deeds. The youth is the hope of the boy, the man of the youth. Thus didst thou walk before me, ever before me; I saw thee without envy, and followed after, step by step; at length I hoped to

see thee — I saw thee, and my heart flew to thy embrace. I had destined thee for myself, and when I beheld thee, I made choice of thee anew. I hoped now to know thee, to live with thee, to be thy friend, — thy — 'tis over now and I see thee here!

EGMONT. My friend, if it can be any comfort to thee, be assured that the very moment we met my heart was drawn toward thee. Now listen! Let us exchange a few quiet words. Tell me: is it the stern, the settled purpose of thy father to take my life?

FERDINAND. It is.

EGMONT. This sentence is not a mere empty scarecrow, designed to terrify me, to punish me through fear and intimidation, to humiliate me, that he may then raise me again by the royal favour?

FERDINAND. Alas, no! At first I flattered myself with this delusive hope; and even then my heart was filled with grief and anguish to behold thee thus. Thy doom is real! is certain! No, I cannot command myself. Who will counsel, who will aid me to meet the inevitable?

EGMONT. Hearken then to me! If thy heart is impelled so powerfully in my favour, if thou dost abhor the tyranny that holds me fettered, then deliver me! The moments are precious. Thou art the son of the all-powerful, and thou hast power thyself. Let us fly! I know the roads; the means of effecting our escape cannot be unknown to thee. These walls, a few short miles, alone separate me from my friends. Loose these fetters, conduct me to them; be ours. The king, on some future day, will doubtless thank my deliverer. Now he is taken by surprise, or perchance he is ignorant of the whole proceeding. Thy father ventures on this daring step, and majesty, though horror-struck at the deed, must needs sanction the irrevocable. Thou dost deliberate? Oh, contrive for me the way to freedom! Speak; nourish hope in a living soul.

FERDINAND. Cease! Oh, cease! Every word deepens my despair. There is here no outlet, no counsel, no escape. — 'Tis this thought that tortures me, that seizes my heart, and rends it as with talons. I have myself spread the net. I know its firm, inextricable knots; I know that every avenue is barred alike to courage and to stratagem. I feel that I, too, like thyself, like all the rest, am fettered. Think'st thou that I should give way to lamentation if any means of safety remained untried? I have thrown myself at his feet, remonstrated, implored. He has sent me hither, in order to blast in this fatal moment every remnant of joy and happiness that yet survived within my heart.

EGMONT. And is there no deliverance?

FERDINAND. None!

EGMONT. (*stamping his foot*) No deliverance! — Sweet life! Sweet pleasant habitude of existence and of activity! from thee must I part! Not in the tumult of battle, amid the din of arms, the excitement of the fray, dost thou send me a hasty farewell; thine is no hurried leave; thou dost not abridge the moment of separation. Once more let me clasp thy hand, gaze once more into thine eyes, feel with keen emotion thy beauty and thy worth, then resolutely tear myself away, and say: — depart!

FERDINAND. Must I stand by and look passively on; unable to save thee or to give thee aid! What voice avails for lamentation! What heart but must break under the pressure of such anguish?

EGMONT. Be calm!

FERDINAND. Thou canst be calm, thou canst renounce; led on by necessity, thou canst advance to the direful struggle with the courage of a hero. What can I do? What ought I to do? Thou dost conquer thyself and us; thou art the victor; I survive both myself and thee. I have lost my light at the banquet, my

banner on the field. The future lies before me dark, desolate, perplexed.

EGMONT. Young friend, whom, by a strange fatality, at the same moment I both win and lose, who dost feel for me, who dost suffer for me the agonies of death, —look on me; — thou wilt not lose me. If my life was a mirror in which thou didst love to contemplate thyself so be also my death. Men are not together only when in each other's presence; — the distant, the departed, also live for us. I shall live for thee, and for myself I have lived long enough. I have enjoyed each day; each day I have performed, with prompt activity, the duties enjoined by my conscience. Now my life ends, as it might have ended, long, long ago, on the sands of Gravelines. I shall cease to live; but I have lived. My friend, follow in my steps, lead a cheerful and a joyous life, and dread not the approach of death.

FERDINAND. Thou shouldst have saved thyself for us, thou couldst have saved thyself. Thou art the cause of thine own destruction. Often have I listened when able men discoursed concerning thee; foes and friends, they would dispute long as to thy worth; but on one point they were agreed, none ventured to deny, every one confessed, that thou wert treading a dangerous path. How often have I longed to warn thee! Hadst thou then no friends?

EGMONT. I was warned.

FERDINAND. And when I found all these allegations, point for point, in the indictment, together with thy answers, containing much that might serve to palliate thy conduct, but no evidence weighty enough fully to exculpate thee —

EGMONT. No more of this. Man imagines that he directs his life, that he governs his actions, when in fact his existence is irresistibly controlled by his destiny. Let us not dwell upon this subject; these reflec-

tions I can dismiss with ease — not so my apprehensions for these provinces; yet they too will be cared for. Could my blood flow for many, bring peace to my people, how freely should it flow! Alas! This may not be. Yet it ill becomes a man idly to speculate when the power to act is no longer his. If thou canst restrain or guide the fatal power of thy father, do so. Alas, who can? — Farewell!

FERDINAND. I cannot leave thee.

EGMONT. Let me urgently recommend my followers to thy care. I have worthy men in my service; let them not be dispersed, let them not become destitute! How fares it with Richard, my secretary?

FERDINAND. He is gone before thee. They have beheaded him as thy accomplice in high treason.

EGMONT. Poor soul! — Yet one word, and then farewell, I can no more. However powerfully the spirit may be stirred, nature at length irresistibly asserts her rights; and like a child, who, enveloped in a serpent's folds, enjoys refreshing slumber, so the weary one lays himself down to rest before the gates of death, and sleeps soundly, as though a toilsome journey yet lay before him. — One word more, — I know a maiden; thou wilt not despise her because she was mine. Since I can recommend her to thy care, I shall die in peace. Thy soul is noble! in such a man a woman is sure to find a protector. Lives my old Adolphus? Is he free?

FERDINAND. The active old man, who always attended thee on horseback?

EGMONT. The same.

FERDINAND. He lives, he is free.

EGMONT. He knows her dwelling; let him guide thy steps thither, and reward him to his dying day for having shown thee the way to this jewel. — Farewell!

FERDINAND. I cannot leave thee.

EGMONT. (*urging him toward the door*) Farewell!

FERDINAND. Oh, let me linger yet a moment!

EGMONT. No leave-taking, my friend.

[*He accompanies* FERDINAND *to the door, and then tears himself away*; FERDINAND, *overwhelmed with grief, hastily retires.*

EGMONT. Hostile man! Thou didst not think thou would render me this service through thy son. He has been the means of relieving my mind from the pressure of care and sorrow, from fear and every anxious feeling. Gently, yet urgently, nature claims her final tribute. 'Tis past!—'Tis resolved! And the reflections which, in the suspense of last night, kept me wakeful on my couch, now lull my senses to repose with invincible certainty. (*He seats himself upon the couch; music.*) Sweet sleep! Like the purest happiness, thou comest most willingly, uninvited, unsought. Thou dost loosen the knots of earnest thoughts, dost mingle all images of joy and of sorrow; unimpeded the circle of inner harmony flows on, and, wrapped in fond delusion, we sink away and cease to be.

[*He sleeps; music accompanies his slumber. Behind his couch the wall appears to open and discovers a brilliant apparition. Freedom in a celestial garb, surrounded by a glory, reposes on a cloud. Her features are those of* CLARA, *and she inclines towards the sleeping hero. Her countenance betokens compassion, she seems to lament his fate. Quickly she recovers herself, and with an encouraging gesture exhibits the symbols of freedom, the bundle of arrows, with the staff and cap. She encourages him to be of good cheer, and while she signifies to him that his death will secure the freedom of the provinces, she hails him as a conqueror, and extends to him a laurel crown. As the wreath approaches his head,* EGMONT *moves like one asleep, and reclines*

with his face towards her. She holds the wreath suspended over his head; — martial music is heard in the distance; at the first sound the vision disappears. The music grows louder and louder. EGMONT *awakes. The prison is dimly illuminated by the dawn. —His first impulse is to lift his hand to his head; he stands up, and gazes round, his hand still upraised.*

The crown is vanished! Beautiful vision, the light of day has frighted thee! Yes, they revealed themselves to my sight uniting in one radiant form the two sweetest joys of my heart. Divine Liberty borrowed the mien of my beloved one; the lovely maiden arrayed herself in the celestial garb of my friend. In a solemn moment they appeared united, with aspect more earnest than tender. With blood-stained feet the vision approached; the waving folds of her robe also were tinged with blood. It was my blood, and the blood of many brave hearts. No! It shall not be shed in vain! Forward! Brave people! The goddess of liberty leads you on! And as the sea breaks through and destroys the barriers that would oppose its fury, so do ye overwhelm the bulwark of tyranny, and with her impetuous flood sweep it away from the land which it usurps. (*Drums.*)

Hark! Hark! How often has this sound summoned my joyous steps to the field of battle and of victory! How bravely did I tread, with my gallant comrades, the dangerous path of fame! And now from this dungeon I shall go forth to meet a glorious death; I die for freedom, for the cause of which I have lived and fought, and for which I now offer myself up a sorrowing sacrifice. (*The background is occupied by Spanish soldiers with halberts.*)

Yes, lead them on! Close your ranks; ye terrify me not. I am accustomed to stand amid the serried

ranks of war, and environed by the threatening forms of death; to feel, with double zest, the energy of life. (*Drums.*)

The foe closes round on every side! Swords are flashing; courage, friends! Behind are your parents, your wives, your children! (*Pointing to the guard.*)

And these are impelled by the word of their leader, not by their own free will. Protect your homes! And to save those who are most dear to you, be ready to follow my example, and to fall with joy.

[*Drums. As he advances through the guards towards the door in the background the curtain falls. The music joins in, and the scene closes with a symphony of victory.*

The Wayward Lover

A Pastoral Drama in Verse and in One Act

Translated by Edgar A. Bowring, C. B.

This little drama was written in the years 1767 and 1768, whilst Goethe, at the age of eighteen, was still a student at Leipsic. It commemorates his attachment to Katarina Schönkopf, the circumstances of which are illustrated by the characters of Eridon and Amina.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Egle.	Eridon.
Amina.	Lamon.

The Wayward Lover

SCENE I.

AMINA *and* EGLE *are sitting on one side of the theatre making garlands.* LAMON *enters, bringing a basket of flowers.*

LAMON (*putting down the basket*).

I've brought more flowers.

EGLE.

Oh, thanks!

LAMON.

How fair they are! Just see!
This pink is thine.

EGLE.

The rose? —

LAMON.

Dear child, that's not for thee!
Amina shall to-day receive this floweret fair;
I think a rose looks best contrasted with black hair.

EGLE.

And this thou callest polite, obliging in a lover?

LAMON.

For one who loves, thou'rt slow my nature to discover.
I'm perfectly aware thou lovest only me,
And my true heart in turn will ever beat for thee;
Thou knowest it. Yet thou seekest still stronger chains than these?
Is it so wrong to think that other maids can please?
I let thee say that youth is handsome, this one charming,
Or full of wit, and I see nothing there alarming,
But say so too.

EGLE.

Ne'er lose thy temper, nor will I.
Both make the same mistake. To words of flattery
Oft listen I well pleased; soft words dost thou address,
When I'm not there to hear, to many a shepherdess.
The heart should never deem a little jesting hard;
'Gainst fickleness a mind that's cheerful is a guard.
I'm subject less than thou to jealousy's dominion.

(*To* AMINA.)

Thou smilest at us? Say, dear friend, what's thy opinion?

AMINA.

I've none.

EGLE.

And yet thou knowest I'm happy whilst thou'rt sad.

AMINA.

How so?

EGLE.

How so! Instead of being, like us, glad,
And making all Love's sulks before your laughter fly,

Thy pain begins whene'er thy lover meets thine eye.
I never knew a more unpleasant, selfish creature.
Thou think'st he loves thee. No, I better know his nature;
He sees that thou obeyest. The tyrant loves thee solely
Because thou art a maid who will obey him wholly.

AMINA.

He oft obeys me, too.

EGLE.

To be still more thy master.
Thou watchest all his looks, for fear of some disaster;
The power that in our looks Dame Nature has installed,
Whereby mankind are cowed, and charmingly enthralled,
Hast thou to him transferred, and thou art happy now
If he looks only pleased. With deeply wrinkled brow,
Contracted eyebrows, eyes all wild and dark as night,
And tightly fastened lips, a very charming sight,
Appears he every day, till kisses, tears, harangues,
Disperse each wintry cloud that o'er his forehead hangs.

AMINA.

Thou knowest him not enough, thou never wert his lover;
It is not selfishness that clouds his forehead over.
A whimsical chagrin upon his bosom preys,
And spoils for both of us the finest summer days:
And yet I'm well content that when my voice he hears,
And all my coaxing words, each whim soon disappears.

EGLE.

A mighty bliss, indeed, which one full well might spare!
But name one single joy that he allowed thee e'er.

How throbbed thy breast, whene'er a dance appeared
in view!
Thy lover flies the dance, and takes thee with him, too.
No wonder he can't bear thy presence at a feast;
He hates the very glass touched by thee in the least.
As rivals deems he e'en the birds that chance to please
thee;
How could he happy be, to see another seize thee,
And press thee to his heart, and whisper words of love,
As in the whirling dance before his eyes ye move?

AMINA.

Pray be not so unfair, without the least objection
He let me join this feast, with thee as my protection.

EGLE.

Thou'lt learn the truth soon.

AMINA.

How?

EGLE.

Now, wherefore comes he not?

AMINA.

He little loves the dance.

EGLE.

'Tis nothing but a plot.
If thou returnest well pleased, he'll ask thee in a
trice: —
"You had a happy day?" — "Yes." — "That is very
nice.

You played?" — "At forfeits." — "Ah! was Damon also there?
You danced?" — "Yes, round the tree." — "I fain had seen the pair.
He danced right well? And what reward received the youth?"

AMINA (*smiling*).

Yes.

EGLE.

Smilest thou?

AMINA.

Yes, my friend, that is his tone, in truth. —
More flowers!

LAMON.

The best are these.

AMINA.

It is with joy I see
How he the world doth grudge the slightest look from me;
I in this envy see how deep my lover's love,
And this proud consciousness doth all my pangs remove.

EGLE.

I pity thee, poor child. No hope for thee remains,
Since thou thy misery lovest; thou dost but shake thy chains;
And makest thyself believe 'tis music.

AMINA.

For this bow
One ribbon still I need.

EGLE (*to* LAMON).

A little time ago
Thou stolest one from me, at that last feast in May.

LAMON.

I'll fetch it.

EGLE.

Make good haste; return without delay.

SCENE II.

EGLE, AMINA.

AMINA.

He sets but little store on what his love presented.

EGLE.

With his demeanour I myself am not contented.
For playful signs of love too little careth he,
Which please a feeling heart, however small they be.
And yet believe me, friend, the torment is far less
To be too little loved, than worshipped to excess.
Fidelity I prize; 'tis that alone can give
With certainty true calm, to last us whilst we live.

AMINA.

Ah, friend! indeed a heart thus tender is a prize.
'Tis true he grieves me oft, yet pities he my sighs.
If from his lips a sound of blame or wrath is heard,
I've nothing more to do than speak a kindly word,
And straightway he is changed, his anger disappears,
He even weeps with me, when he observes my tears,
Falls humbly at my feet, and begs me to forgive.

EGLE.

And thou forgivest him?

AMINA.

Yes.

EGLE.

What a way to live!
The lover who offends to go on pardoning ever!
Take pains to win his love, and be rewarded never!

AMINA.

What cannot e'er be changed —

EGLE.

Not changed? 'Twould easy be
To alter him.

AMINA.

How so?

EGLE.

I'll teach the way to thee.
The source of all thy griefs, the discontent oppressive
Of Eridon —

AMINA.

Is what?

EGLE.

Thy tenderness excessive.

AMINA.

I thought my plan would love reciprocal engender.

EGLE.

Thou'rt wrong; be harsh and cold, and thou wilt find
him tender.
Just try this course for once, make him some pain
endure:
A man prefers to strive, he cares not to be sure.
If Eridon should come to spend with thee an hour,
He knows it but too well, thou'rt wholly in his power.
No rival is at hand, with whom to disagree,
He knows thou lovest him far more than he loves thee.
His bliss is far too great, he well deserves our laughter;
As he no pangs e'er feels, he needs must pangs run after.
He sees that in the world thou lovest him alone,
He doubts, because by thee no doubts are ever shown.
So treat him that he'll think thou carest little for him;
He'll storm, indeed, but that will very soon pass o'er
him.
One look from thee will then please more than now a
kiss;
Make him afraid, and he will then soon know true bliss.

AMINA.

Yes, that is very well; but then I'm quite unable
To carry out thy plan.

EGLE.

Thy courage is unstable.
Go, thou art far too weak. Look there!

AMINA.

My Eridon!

EGLE.

I thought so. Ah, my poor child! he comes, and thou
anon
Dost shake with joy: that ne'er will do. To make
him change,

Thou must, when he appears, a calmer mien arrange;
That heaving of thy breast! Thy face, too, all aglow!
And then —

AMINA.

O let me be, Amina loves not so.

Scene III.

ERIDON *advances slowly, with his arms crossed.* AMINA *arises and runs to meet him.* EGLE *continues sitting over her work.*

AMINA (*taking him by the hand*).

My own dear Eridon!

ERIDON (*kissing her hand*).

My darling!

EGLE (*aside*).

Ah, how pleasant!

AMINA.

What flowers! Explain, my friend, who gave thee such a present?

ERIDON.

Who? My own loved one.

AMINA.

What! my gift of yesterday,
As fresh as they were then?

ERIDON.

Whate'er thou givest, say,
Is it not dear to me? But those I gave thee?

AMINA.

Oh,
I in this festal wreath have placed them.

ERIDON.

Be it so!
Love in each young man's heart, and envy in each maid
Wilt thou excite.

EGLE.

Rejoice to find thy love repaid
By such a maiden's love, for which so many vie.

ERIDON.

I cannot happy be to hear so many sigh.

EGLE.

Thou shouldst be; few men's lot with thine could e'er compare.

ERIDON (*to* AMINA).

Now speak about the fête; will Damon, too, be there?

EGLE (*interrupting*).

That he would present be, I heard him say by chance.

ERIDON (*to* AMINA).

My child, and who will be thy partner in the dance?
[*As* AMINA *does not answer he turns to* EGLE.
Take care to choose for her the one she holds most dear.

AMINA.

That cannot be, my friend, since thou wilt not be near!

EGLE.

Now, hear me, Eridon, I cannot bear it more,
Strange pleasure is it thus to plague Amina sore.
Forsake her if thou thinkest that she's no longer true,
But if thou thinkest she loves, this course no more pursue.

ERIDON.

I never plague her.

EGLE.

No? How strange are all thy measures
From jealousy to cast a gloom upon her pleasures,
To doubt, although the fact is known to thee full clearly,
If she —

ERIDON.

Wilt thou be bail that she doth love me dearly?

AMINA.

I love thee not?

ERIDON.

What proof hast thou at thy command?
Who let bold Damon steal a nosegay from her hand?
Who took that ribbon fair which youthful Thirsis brought?

AMINA.

My Eridon! —

ERIDON.

All this was not a dream, methought.
And what was their reward? Thou kisses canst bestow!

AMINA.

Canst thou not, dearest, too?

EGLE.

Oh, peace, he'll nothing know!
Whate'er there was to say thou said'st it o'er and o'er.
He listens for a time, and then complains once more.
And what's the use? If thou his charges shouldst disclaim,
He'll go away in peace, and next time do the same.

ERIDON.

With justice, too, perchance.

AMINA.

What! I unfaithful? oh,
Amina false, my friend? Dost thou believe it?

ERIDON.

No!
I cannot, will not.

AMINA.

Say, in all my life did I
E'er give occasion?

ERIDON.

Thou dost oft a cause supply.

AMINA.

When was I faithless?

ERIDON.

Ne'er! Hence all these cares of mine:
Through levity thou err'st, and never by design.

As trifles thou dost hold the things I weighty deem;
The things that vex me most to thee as nothing seem.

EGLE.

Well! If she deems them nought where is the mischief, pray?

ERIDON.

She often asked the same; it vexes me, I say.

EGLE.

What then? Amina ne'er forgets her own position.

ERIDON.

Too much to deem her true, too little for suspicion.

EGLE.

More than a woman's heart e'er loved she loveth thee.

ERIDON.

And dances, pleasures, games, she loves as much as me.

EGLE.

Who cannot this endure should only love our mothers!

AMINA.

Peace, Egle! Eridon, my joy thy language smothers.
Our friends will tell thee how I think of thee all day,
E'en when we're far from thee, and full of mirth and play;
How oft I with chagrin, that spoils my pleasure, cry,
"I wonder where he is!" because thou art not nigh.
If thou believest me not, O come to-day with me,
And settle for thyself if I'm untrue to thee.
I'll dance with thee alone, I'll never leave thy side,

This arm shall cling to thine, this hand in thine abide.
If my behaviour then the least mistrust should wake —

ERIDON.

To keep oneself in check, no proof of love can make.

EGLE.

Behold her falling tears! they're flowing in thy honour;
Ne'er thought I that thy heart so basely looked upon her.
The boundless discontent, incessant and diseased,
Which ever asks for more, the more it is appeased, —
The pride which will not let within thy sight appear
The guileless joys of youth her bosom holds so dear, —
Within thy hateful heart alternately they reign,
Thou heedest not her love, thou heedest not her pain.
She's dear to me, and thou no more shall treat her ill;
To fly thee will be hard; to love thee, harder still.

AMINA (*aside*).

Ah, wherefore must my heart with love be flowing o'er!

ERIDON (*standing still for a moment, and then timidly approaching* AMINA *and taking her hand*).

Amina, dearest child! Canst thou forgive once more?

AMINA.

Have I not granted oft forgiveness full, complete?

ERIDON.

Thou noble, best of hearts, let me before thy feet —

AMINA.

Arise, my Eridon!

EGLE.

Thy many thanks withhold;
What one too warmly feels, will soon again grow cold.

ERIDON.

And all this warmth of heart with which I honour her —

EGLE.

A greater bliss would be, if somewhat less it were.
More calmly would ye live, and all her pain and thine —

ERIDON.

Forgive me once again, more wisdom shall be mine.

AMINA.

Dear Eridon, now go, a nosegay pick for me;
If gathered by thy hand, how charming it will be!

ERIDON.

Thou hast a rose there now!

AMINA.

Her Lamon gave me this.
It suits me well.

ERIDON (*touchily*).

Indeed —

AMINA.

O take it not amiss,
And thou shalt have it, dear.

ERIDON (*embracing her, and kissing her hand*).

I'll bring thee flowers with speed.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

AMINA, EGLE. *Presently* LAMON.

EGLE.

O poor, good-hearted child, this plan will ne'er succeed!
The more that it is fed, more hungry grows his pride.
Take heed, 'twill rob thee else of all thou lovest beside.

AMINA.

One care alone I have, lest he should not be true.

EGLE.

How charming! One can see thy love is very new.
'Tis always so at first; when once one's heart is given,
One thinks of nothing else but love from morn till even.
If we, then, at this time a touching novel read,
How greatly this one loved, and that one, true indeed,
That hero soft of heart, so bold when dangers hover,
So mighty in the fight, because he was a lover, —
Our head 'gins whirling round, we deem it our own story.
We fain would wretched be, or covered o'er with glory.
A youthful heart soon takes impressions from a novel;
A loving heart still less inclines on earth to grovel;
And so we long time love, until we find that we,
Instead of being true, were fools to a degree.

AMINA.

Yet that is not my case.

EGLE.

A patient oft will tell
The doctor in a rage that he is sound and well.
Do we believe him? No. Despite his opposition,
His medicine he must take. And that is thy condition.

AMINA.

'Tis true of children, yes; but 'tis not true of me;
Am I a child?

EGLE.

Thou lovest!

AMINA!

Thou, too!

EGLE.

Yes, love as we!
First moderate the storm which hurries thee along!
One can be very calm, although one's love is strong.

LAMON.

Here is the ribbon!

AMINA.

Thanks!

EGLE.

Thou art a laggard wooer!

LAMON.

I was upon the hill when Chloris called me to her,
And made me deck her hat with flowers ere she dismissed me.

EGLE.

And what was thy reward?

LAMON.

Mine? None; she only kissed me.
Whatever one may do, no maiden can afford
To give a greater prize than kisses in reward.

AMINA (*showing* EGLE *the wreath with the loop*).

Is all now right?

EGLE.

Yes, come!

[*She hangs the wreath on* AMINA *so that the loop comes on the right shoulder. In the meantime she talks to* LAMON.

To-day right merry be!

LAMON.

Right noisy be to-day. We feel not half the glee
When we demurely meet, discussing in full quorum
Our loved one's whims, or else the duties of decorum.

EGLE.

Thou'rt very right.

LAMON.

O, yes!

EGLE.

Amina! Sit thou here!

[AMINA *sits down.* EGLE *puts flowers in her hair, while she continues.*

Come, give me back the kiss that Chloris gave thee, dear!

LAMON (*kissing her*).

Most gladly. Here it is.

AMINA.

How very strange ye are!

EGLE.

Were Eridon the same, thou wouldst be happier far.

AMINA.

He ne'er, instead of me, would kiss another maid.

LAMON.

Where is the rose?

EGLE.

When he attempted to upbraid,
She gave it him for peace.

AMINA.

I wish to be polite.

LAMON.

If thou dost pardon him, he'll pardon thee. Quite right!
Yes, each the other plagues in turn, I clearly see.

EGLE.

EGLE (*as a sign that she is ready with the decoration for the head*).

There!

LAMON.

Good!

AMINA.

I wish the flowers were ready now for me
That Eridon should bring.

EGLE.

Do thou await him here.
I'll go and deck myself. Come also, Lamon, dear!
We'll leave thee here alone, but soon be back again.

Scene V.

AMINA (*Presently* ERIDON).

What enviable bliss! Oh, what a tender swain!
How wish I that it but depended upon me
My Eridon content, myself made blest, to see!
Did I not to his hands such influence o'er me give,
Far happier he would be, and I in peace should live.
If to o'ercome this power I seeming coldness try,
At my indifference he'll into fury fly.
I know his wrath, and dread to feel it; thou, my heart,
Wouldst very badly play so difficult a part.
Yet, if thou wouldst succeed as fully as thy friend,
And 'stead of serving him, his will to thine wouldst bend,
To-day's the very time; I never must allow
The chance to pass . . . He comes! My heart, take courage now!

ERIDON (*giving her flowers*).

They're not so very good, my child! pray, pardon me,
I gathered them in haste.

AMINA.

Enough, they are from thee.

ERIDON.

They're not so blooming quite, as those fair roses were
That Damon stole from thee.

AMINA (*placing them in her bosom*).

I'll keep them safely there.
There where thou art enshrined, these flowers should also blow.

ERIDON.

If there alone they're safe —

AMINA.

Hast thou suspicions? —

ERIDON.

No!
I've none, my child; 'tis fear alone I feel to-day.
The best of hearts forgets, 'midst merry sport and play,
When happy in the dance, and at the noisy fête,
What duty may enjoin, and wisdom may dictate.
Thou may'st perhaps think of me, when in this joyous vein,
Yet thou dost not attempt the freedom to restrain
Which youths allow themselves to practise, bit by bit,
If maidens but in jest a liberty permit.
Their idle pride presumes to treat as love ere long
A pleasant playful mien.

AMINA.

Enough, if they are wrong.
'Tis true that loving sighs pursue me by the score;
Yet thou dost hold my heart, and say, what wouldst thou more?
Poor fellows! upon me thou mightest let them look;
They think that wonder —

ERIDON.

No, such thoughts I will not brook.
'Tis that that vexes me. Well know I thou art mine;

Yet one of them perchance the same thing may opine,
And gaze upon thine eyes, and think to give a kiss,
And triumph in the thought that he has spoiled my bliss.

AMINA.

Destroy his triumph, then! Beloved one, with me go;
Let them the preference see which thou —

ERIDON.

I thank thee, no!
That sacrifice to claim would show a cruel will;
Thou, child, wouldst be ashamed of one who danced so ill;
I know whom in the dance as partner thou approvest;
The one who dances best, and not the one thou lovest.

AMINA.

That is the truth.

ERIDON (*with restrained irony*).

Ah, yes, I often have regretted
The gifts of Damaris, so light of foot, and petted!
How well he dances!

AMINA.

Yes, none like him in the dance.

ERIDON.

And each maid —

AMINA.

Prizes him —

ERIDON.

Adores him for't!

AMINA.

Perchance.

ERIDON.

Perchance? The devil! Yes!

AMINA.

What mean those strange grimaces?

ERIDON.

Thou askest? Thou'lt drive me mad. Thy conduct a disgrace is!

AMINA.

Mine? Art not thou the cause of my and thy great woe?
Oh, cruel Eridon! How canst thou treat me so?

ERIDON.

I must; I love thee well. 'Tis love that makes me vex thee.
Loved I not thee so much I never should perplex thee.
My feeling, tender heart with ecstasy beats high,
When thy hand presses mine, when on me smiles thine eye.
I thank the gods who give such bliss without alloy,
Yet only I demand that none shall share my joy.

AMINA.

Of what dost thou complain? No others share it now.

ERIDON.

Yet thou endurest them? No hatred feelest thou?

AMINA.

I hate them? Why should I?

ERIDON.

Because they dare to love thee.

AMINA.

A pretty ground!

ERIDON.

I see thou lettest their sighing move thee.
Their feelings thou must spare; and lessened is thy pleasure,
Unless thou —

AMINA.

Eridon's injustice knows no measure!
Does love require that we humanity should shun?
A heart that truly loves, can hate no other one.
This tender feeling ne'er with such base thoughts can dwell,
Never at least with me.

ERIDON.

Thou vindicatest well
The gentle sex's proud and high prerogative,
If twenty blockheads kneel, the twenty to deceive!
To-day's a day when pride may specially enfold thee.
To-day thou'lt many see, who as a goddess hold thee;
Full many a youthful heart will throb for thee right hard;
Remember me, when swarms of fools around thee run;
I am the greatest! Go!

AMINA (*aside*).

Fly, weak heart, he has won.
Ye gods! lives he for nought but to destroy my peace?
Must my distress still last, and never, never cease?
[*To* ERIDON.
The gentle bonds of love thou turnest to a yoke:
A tyrant thou to me, yet I my love invoke!
With tenderness to all thy wrath have I replied,
I ever yield to thee, yet thou'rt not satisfied.
No sacrifice I've spared. Contented ne'er art thou.
My pleasure of to-day thou claimest? Thou hast it now!
[*She takes the wreaths out of her hair and from her shoulder, throws them away, and continues in a restrained calm voice.*
Now say, dear Eridon? Thou lovest me better so,
Than for the feast arrayed? Thine anger now forego.
Thou wilt not look at me? Remains thy heart still hardened?

ERIDON (*falling down before her*).

Amina, thee I love! Be my vile conduct pardoned!
Go to the feast.

AMINA.

My friend, with thee I'd sooner stay;
A loving song will serve to while the time away.

ERIDON.

Dear child, now go!

AMINA.

Go thou, and quickly fetch thy flute.

ERIDON.

Thou will'st it?

Scene VI.

AMINA.

He seems sad, yet feels rejoicings mute.
In vain wilt thou on him thy tenderness bestow.
He feels my sacrifice? He little heeds it; no,
He deems it but his due. What wouldst thou, my poor heart?
Thou murmurest in my breast. Deserved I all this smart?
Yes, thou deservest it well! Thou seest he never ceases
To torture thee, and yet thy love for him increases.
I will not bear it more. Hush! Ha, I hear the din
Of music there. My heart doth throb, my foot joins in.
I'll go! My troubled breast my misery proclaims!
How wretched do I feel! My heart with burning flames
Consumes. Off, to the feast! He will not let me move!
Unhappy maiden! See this is the bliss of love!
[*She throws herself on a bank, and weeps; as the others enter, she dries her eyes and rises.*
Alas, they now approach! How can I face their jeers!

Scene VII.

Amina, Egle, Lamon.

EGLE.

Make haste! The march begins! Amina! What! In tears?

LAMON (*picking up the wreaths*).

The garlands?

EGLE.

What means this? Who tore them off? Confess!

AMINA.

Myself.

EGLE.

Wilt thou not go?

AMINA.

If he will let me, yes.

EGLE.

If who will let thee? Say, why talk in this mysterious
And unaccustomed tone? Be not so shy and serious!
Is't Eridon?

AMINA.

Yes, he!

EGLE.

I thought that it was so.
Thou fool! and will thy wrongs ne'er make thee wiser grow?
Thou hast a promise made that thou with him wilt stay,
And pass in tears and sighs such a delightful day?
He's flattered, child, when thou for all his whims thus carest.
[*After a pause, whilst she makes signs to* LAMON.
Yet thou far better lookest when thou the garland wearest.

Come, put it on! and hang the other o'er thee thus!
Thou'rt charming now.

[AMINA *stands with downcast eyes, and lets* EGLE *have her way.* EGLE *gives a sign to* LAMON.

But, ah! 'tis fully time for us
To join the march.

LAMON.

Quite right! My dearest child, adieu!

AMINA (*sorrowfully*).

Farewell!

EGLE (*departing*).

Amina! now, wilt thou join us, too?

[AMINA *looks at her sadly and is silent.*

LAMON (*taking* EGLE *by the hand to lead her off*).

O leave her to herself! With spite I'm fit to die;
The charming dance she'll spoil with her perversity!
The dance both right and left, she knows it all by heart;
I fully thought that she would take her proper part.
She'll stop at home now! Come, I've nothing more to say.

EGLE.

Thou dost forego the dance! I pity thee to-day.
He dances well! Good-bye!

[EGLE *seeks to kiss* AMINA. AMINA *falls on her neck, and weeps.*

AMINA.

Complete is my dismay.

EGLE.

Thou weepest.

AMINA.

My saddened heart in brief despairing sinks!
I fain would . . . Eridon, I hate thee now, methinks!

EGLE.

He merits it. But no! A lover who e'er hated?
Love him thou shouldst, nor let thyself be subjugated.
I long have told thee this. Come!

LAMON.

Join the dance with me!

AMINA.

And Eridon?

EGLE.

Now go! I'll stay! He'll yield, thou'lt see,
And join thee. Say, would this afford thee any pleasure?

AMINA.

Immense!

LAMON.

Now come! Dost hear the shawm's soft, dulcet measure?
The charming melody?
[*He takes* AMINA *by the hand, and sings and dances.*

EGLE (*sings*).

If ever a lover with jealousy vile
Annoys thee, complains of a nod or a smile,
Accuses of falsehood or other invention,
Then sing thou, and dance thou, and pay no attention.
[LAMON *carries* AMINA *off with him to the dance.*

AMINA (*as she goes*).

Fail not in thy persuasion!

Scene VIII.

EGLE, *and presently* ERIDON, *with a flute and songs.*

EGLE.

'Tis well! We soon shall see! I long have sought occasion
This shepherd to convert, and make his ways more courtly.
To-day's my wish fulfilled; I'll teach thee manners shortly!
I'll show thee who thou art; and at the least suggestion —
He comes! List, Eridon!

ERIDON.

Where is she?

EGLE.

What a question!
With Lamon yonder, where thou hearest the cornets blow.

ERIDON (*throwing his flute on the ground and tearing the songs*).

Vile infidelity!

EGLE.

Art mad?

ERIDON.

I should be so.[1]

[1] This line in the original contains the only false Alexandrine in the play. — E. A. B.

The hypocrite first tears the garlands from her brow
With smiling face, and says: I will not dance, dear, now!
Did I insist on that? And . . . Oh!
[*He stamps with his foot, and throws the torn songs away.*

EGLE (*in a composed voice*).

Let me inquire
What right hast thou to make her from the dance retire?
Thou wishest that a heart, which with thy love is filled,
Should know no other joys than those by thee instilled?
Dost think all impulses for pleasure are suppressed,
As soon as thoughts of love pervade a maiden's breast?
Enough, if she to thee her dearest hours will give,
On thee, when absent, think, with thee would ever live.
'Tis folly, then, my friend, in grief to make her dwell;
So let her love the dance, and games, and thee, as well.

ERIDON (*dropping his arms and looking up*).

Ah!

EGLE.

Tell me, dost thou deem that any love is shown
By keeping her with thee? 'Tis slavery alone.
Thou comest: at the fête no other she may see;
Thou goest: and forthwith she needs must go with thee;
She lingers: straightway thou dost give her looks unkind;
She follows thee, but oft her heart is left behind.

ERIDON.

Perhaps always!

EGLE.

People hear, when bitter words are said,
There where no freedom is, all joys will soon be dead.
Thus are we made. A child a few words may have sung;
You bid him sing away. He starts and holds his tongue.
If thou her freedom leavest, her love thou'st forfeit ne'er;
If thou behavest too ill, she'll hate thee; so beware!

ERIDON.

She'll hate me?

EGLE.

Rightly too. Then seize a day like this,
And for thyself procure love's tenderness and bliss!
None but a tender heart, by its own glow impelled,
Can constant be, by love incessantly upheld.
Confess now, canst thou tell if any bird is true,
When kept within a cage?

ERIDON.

No!

EGLE.

If, with freedom new,
It flies o'er gardens, fields, and yet to thee returns?

ERIDON.

Quite right, I understand!

EGLE.

What rapture in thee burns,
To see the little thing, which loves thee tenderly,

Its freedom know, and yet the preference give to thee!
And if thy maiden e'er, excited by the dance,
From any fête comes back, and seeks thee, while each glance
Betrays that all her joys imperfect bliss supply,
While thou, her lover, thou, her own one, art not by;
If she will then declare one kiss of thine to be
More than a thousand fêtes: who would not envy thee?

ERIDON (*moved*).

O Egle!

EGLE.

Tremble lest the gods should take amiss
That one so blest as thou so little knows his bliss!
Up! Be contented, friend! Or they'll the tears that flow
From that poor maid avenge.

ERIDON.

Could I accustomed grow,
To see how in the dance her hands so many press,—
While this one ogles her, she looks at that one! Yes,
When I on this reflect, my heart feels like to break!

EGLE.

What nonsense! What a fuss for trifles thou dost make!
There's nothing in a kiss!

ERIDON.

A kiss is nought, say'st thou?

EGLE.

Methinks that in his heart there is some feeling now,
If thus he talks. But say, wilt thou forgive her, friend?
For when thou art displeased, her sorrow knows no end.

ERIDON.

Ah, friend!

EGLE (*flatteringly*).

This will not do! Thou also art a lover.
Farewell! [*She takes him by the hand.*
Thou'rt all aglow!

ERIDON.

My blood is boiling over —

EGLE.

With anger still? Enough! Thy pardon now has she.
I'll hasten to her straight. She'll trembling ask for thee;
I'll tell her: he is kind; composure this will give her,
Her heart will softer beat, she'll love thee more than ever. [*She looks at him sentimentally.*
She'll surely seek thee out when ended is the feast,
And by the search itself her love will be increased.
[EGLE *affects still more tenderness, and leans upon his shoulder. He takes her hand and kisses it.*
She'll find thee presently! O what a moment this!
Press her against thy breast and feel thy perfect bliss!
A maid, when dancing, looks more fair, her cheeks are glowing,
Her mouth is wreathed with smiles, her loosened locks are flowing
Over her heaving breast, more tender charms enhance
The beauties of her form, when whirling in the dance;
Her throbbing pulses glow, and as her body sways,
Each nerve appears to thrill and greater life displays.
[*She pretends to feel a tender rapture, and sinks upon his breast, while he places his arm around her waist.*
The bliss of seeing this what rapture can excel?
Thou'lt go not to the fête, and therefore canst not tell.

ERIDON.

Dear friend, upon thy breast I feel it all too well!

[*He falls upon* EGLE'S *neck and kisses her, while she offers no resistance. She then steps back a few paces, and asks in an indifferent tone.*

Lovest thou Amina?

ERIDON.

As myself!

EGLE.

Yet darest thou
To kiss me? Thou shalt pay the penalty, I vow!
Thou faithless man!

ERIDON.

But what dost thou suppose that I —

EGLE.

Yes, I suppose it all. My friend, right tenderly
Thou kissedst me, 'tis true. Therewith I'm well content.
Was my kiss good? No doubt: thy hot lips prove assent,
And ask for more. Poor child! Amina, wert thou here!

ERIDON.

I would she were!

EGLE.

How vain! She'd wretched be, poor dear!

ERIDON.

.y, she would scold me well! Thou must betray me not.
I've kissed thee, but that kiss will not hurt her a jot;

And if Amina gave me kisses most enchanting,
May I not feel that thine in rapture are not wanting?

EGLE.

Best ask herself.

Scene IX.

Amina, Egle, Eridon.

ERIDON.

Woe's me!

AMINA.

I long to see him so!
My own dear Eridon! 'Twas Egle made me go.
Alas! I broke my word; my friend, I'll go not now.

ERIDON (*aside*).

Wretch that I am!

AMINA.

Thou'rt wroth? thy face avertest thou?

ERIDON (*aside*).

What can I say?

AMINA.

Alas! Is all this anger due
For such a little fault? Thou'rt in the right, 'tis true.
And yet —

EGLE.

O let him go! He gave me such a kiss!
And likes it still.

AMINA.

Kissed thee?

EGLE.

Right tenderly!

AMINA.

Ah, this
Too much is for my heart! Thy love is thus unsteady?
Unhappy I! My friend deserteth me already!
Who kisses other maids, his own will shortly fly.
Ah! since I thee have loved, like this ne'er acted I;
To try to reach my lips, no youth has been so daring;
Even when I forfeits played my kisses have been sparing.
My heart as much as thine is plagued by jealousy,
Yet I'll forgive thee all, if thou wilt turn to me.
And yet, poor heart, in vain art thou so well protected!
No love for me he feels, since he thy wiles suspected.
The mighty advocate for thee in vain doth plead.

ERIDON.

What loving tenderness! How vast my shame, indeed!

AMINA.

My friend, oh, how couldst thou seduce away my lover?

EGLE.

Be comforted, good child! Thy woes will soon be over.
Well know I Eridon, and know that he is true.

AMINA.

And has —

EGLE.

Ay, thou art right, and he has kissed me, too.
I know how it occurred; his fault thou mayest condone.
How deeply he repents!

ERIDON (*falling down before* AMINA).

Amina! O my own!
Oh, blame her! she appeared so pretty when I kissed —
Her mouth was very close, and I could not resist.
Yet, if thou knowest me well, thou pardon must impart;
A little joy like that will not despoil my heart.

EGLE.

Amina, kiss him, since he answers so discreetly!
Despite those little joys, ye love each other sweetly.
[*To* ERIDON.
My friend, thou on thyself must judgment pass this time;
Although she loves the dance, thou see'st that is no crime. [*Mocking him.*
If in the dance a youth her hand may chance to press, —
While this one ogles her, she looks at that one, — yes,
Of even this, thou knowest, thou oughtest not to complain.
I trust that thou wilt ne'er Amina plague again.
Methinks thou'lt with us go.

AMINA.

Come, join the fête.

ERIDON.

I will;
A kiss has been my cure.

EGLE (*to* AMINA).

Thou'lt take that kiss not ill.
Should jealousy again his bosom seek to kindle,

Remind him of that kiss, and 'twill to nothing dwindle. —
And, O ye jealous ones, if maidens plague you e'er,
Recall *your own* false tricks, and blame them, if ye dare.

THE END.

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